



Telemedicine and Older Adults: The Experience Pre- and Mid-Pandemic

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Agenda

- Intro
- Telemedicine definition
- Pre-, post-, mid- pandemic definitions
- Policy and procedure
- Process and procedure
- Population
- Findings
- Implications



Impetus for Project



- Since the beginning of COVID, access to medical care has been impacted.
- Telemedicine has been put in place as a potential solution.
- Many older adults may face challenges using telemedicine, resulting in a barrier to access necessary healthcare.
- Understanding the complexities of their experience is vital to serving the populations with the greatest needs.

Lam et al., 2020

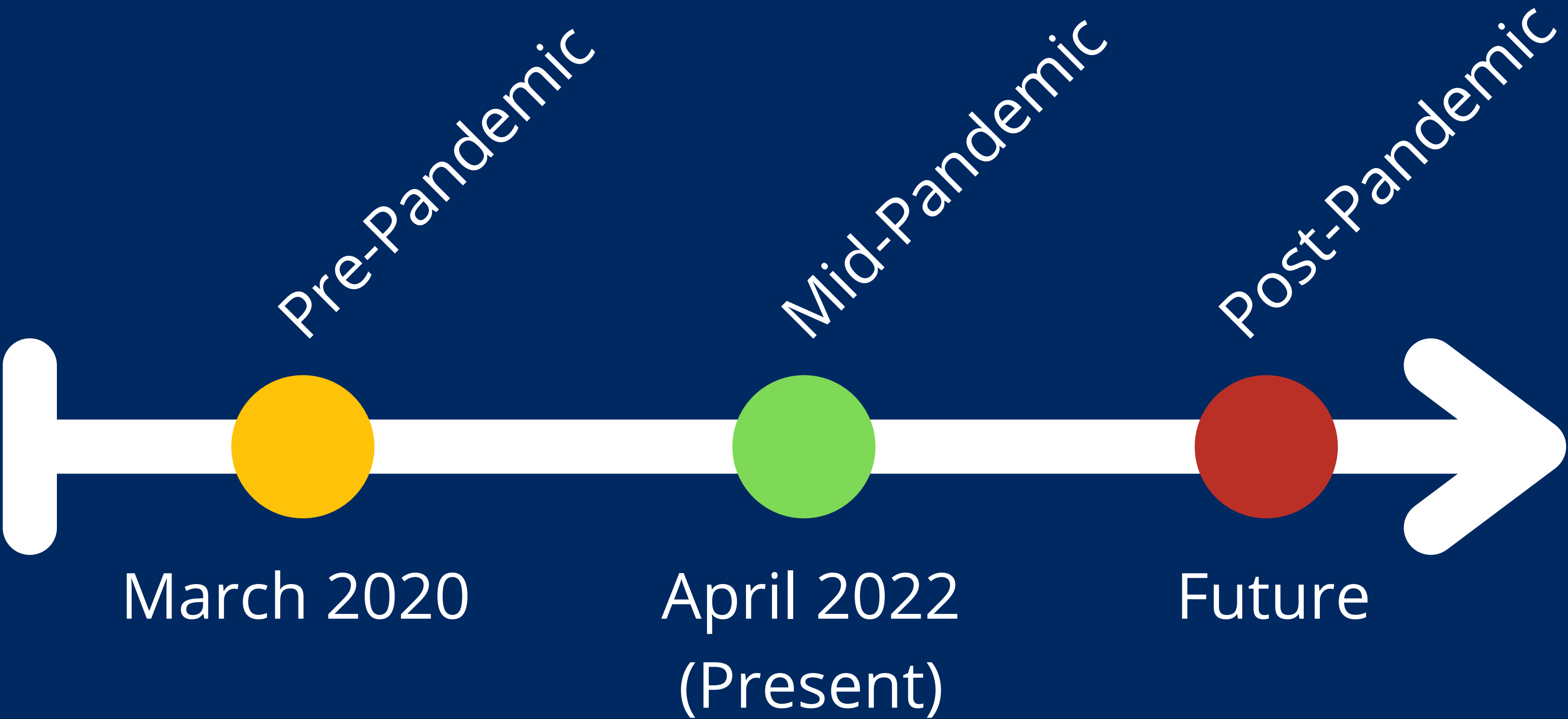


DEFINING TELEMEDICINE



Telemedicine is the use of electronic devices (cell phone, home phone, computer with web cam, laptop, etc.) to connect with health care professionals.

Pandemic Timeline



Pre-Pandemic

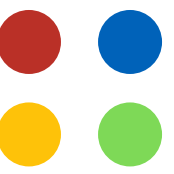
Mid-Pandemic

Post-Pandemic

March 2020

April 2022
(Present)

Future



Process and Procedure

- 17 interviews were conducted with UPMC program participants
- Participants were asked about their history using telemedicine services prior to the onset of COVID-19 and during the pandemic.
- Interviews were recorded using VoiceMemos on an iPhone
- Interviews were transcribed and analyzed for recurring themes and comments





POPULATION

- Adults age 65 and older
- Local senior high-rise residents or community center members

- Living in the greater Pittsburgh area
- 17 participants: 5 men, 12 women

FINDINGS

Out of 17 participants...

- **3** used telemedicine prior to COVID-19
- **8** used telemedicine during COVID-19
- **16** preferred in-person visits
 - Of these, 4 would agree to telemedicine if necessary
- **1** preferred telemedicine visits



WHY DO THEY PREFER IN-PERSON VISITS?



COMFORT

"I am able to express myself more clearly in person and feel like **I am treated with more dignity.**" (paraphrased)

CONVENIENCE

"Usually when I'm in her office, if she wants me to get a blood test, **I can get it right there.**"

CONNECTION

"I want to look at their face to see if they telling me the **truth.**"

WHAT IS **MISSING** FROM
TELE-HEALTH VISITS?



EASE OF USE

"[Technology] doesn't work like it's supposed to"

TIME

"Tele-medicine feels rushed"

RAPPORT

"Tele-health is not as intimate"

Why should we try to improve telemedicine?

- High level of resistance to the use of telemedicine among older adults, though reasons vary
- Telemedicine is not going away
- In some circumstances, telemedicine may be the only avenue for access to specialized or emergency services

Bhatia et al., 2022; Hollander & Carr, 2020





How can we improve telemedicine for older adults?

- Digital literacy training
- Access to technology and devices
- Access to assistance

Telemedicine in the Time of Coronavirus

- Calton et al., 2020

Connecting with Older Adults via Telemedicine

- Nieman & Oh, 2020

Pamphlet with Findings

BACKGROUND

01. DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, TELEHEALTH HAS BECOME A WIDESPREAD SOLUTION TO CONNECTING MEDICAL PROVIDERS TO PATIENTS, BUT OLDER ADULTS OFTEN ENCOUNTER BARRIERS TO ACCESS

02. UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEXITIES OF OLDER ADULTS' EXPERIENCES IS VITAL TO SERVING THIS HIGH NEEDS POPULATION

MSW Hartford Fellowship 2022

TELEMEDICINE AND OLDER ADULTS: THE EXPERIENCE PRE- AND MID-PANDEMIC

Conversations with Older Adults

17 interviews were conducted with older adults asking about experiences using telemedicine prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3 used telemedicine prior to COVID-19
8 used telemedicine during COVID-19

16 out of 17 preferred in-person visits

Of these, 4 would agree to telemedicine if necessary

How can we improve and what are the challenges?

- Offer digital literacy training
 - Requires dedicated staff and significant time investment
- Provide access to required technology and devices
 - Financial and logistical burden
- Ensure access to in-person assistance for older adults using telemedicine
 - Not always available for all older adults

What's missing from telehealth?

Respondents called out...

Convenience
Technology often doesn't work like it is supposed to. In-person visits offer opportunity for immediate lab tests or exams.

Comfort & Connection
Telemedicine feels rushed and not as intimate. Patients want a trusting, genuine connection with a provider.

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QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU

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