

Experience of using virtual care for outpatient psychiatry visits among adults with mental health issues

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Background

- 1 in 10 pregnant women struggle with reproductive mental health concerns.¹
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the rate of in-person visits has declined due to health care provider shortages and/or patient reluctance to attend due to fears about increased exposure to health care settings.²
- Virtual health appointments have been adopted more widely during the COVID-19 pandemic.³
- There is debate regarding how the absence of in-person communication in virtual health care may impact the quality of communication during clinic visits as well as patient satisfaction.⁴

Objectives

- 1) To assess patient satisfaction and experiences using virtual care for outpatient psychiatry clinic visits during the COVID-19 pandemic
- 2) To identify opportunities for improvement in virtual care delivery

Methods

- A 42-question survey consisting of questions related to type of care received, perceived effectiveness of virtual care, quality of virtual care, and open-ended questions regarding suggested areas of improvement were distributed to 107 patients at an outpatient reproductive mental health clinic.
- Results were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis of the survey responses.

Table 1. Baseline Characteristics

Total number of survey responders (n=12)		
Ethnicity	White	50%
	Asian	25%
	Black	17%
	Middle Eastern	8%
Age	26-34 years	42%
	35-44 years	58%
Reason for seeking care at reproductive psychiatry clinic	Depressive symptoms	31%
	Anxiety symptoms	28%
	Counselling	17%
	Medication options	11%
	Pre-menstrual mood/anxiety symptoms	8%
	Peri-natal loss	6%

Results

- Respondents (n=12) were predominantly female aged 26-44 with anxiety and depressive symptoms.

Figure 1. Reason for choosing virtual care appointment

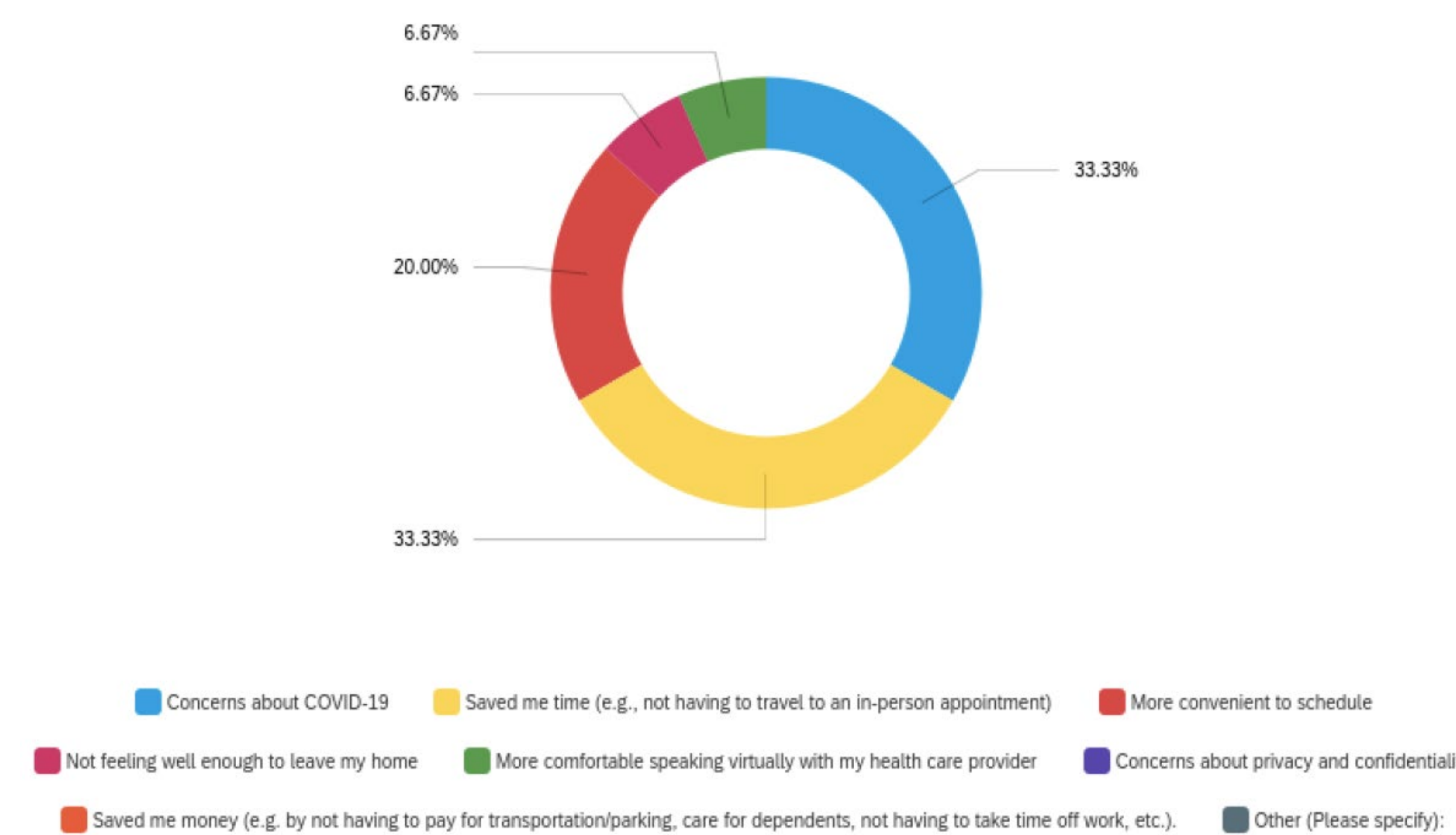


Figure 2. Quality of care experienced during virtual appointment

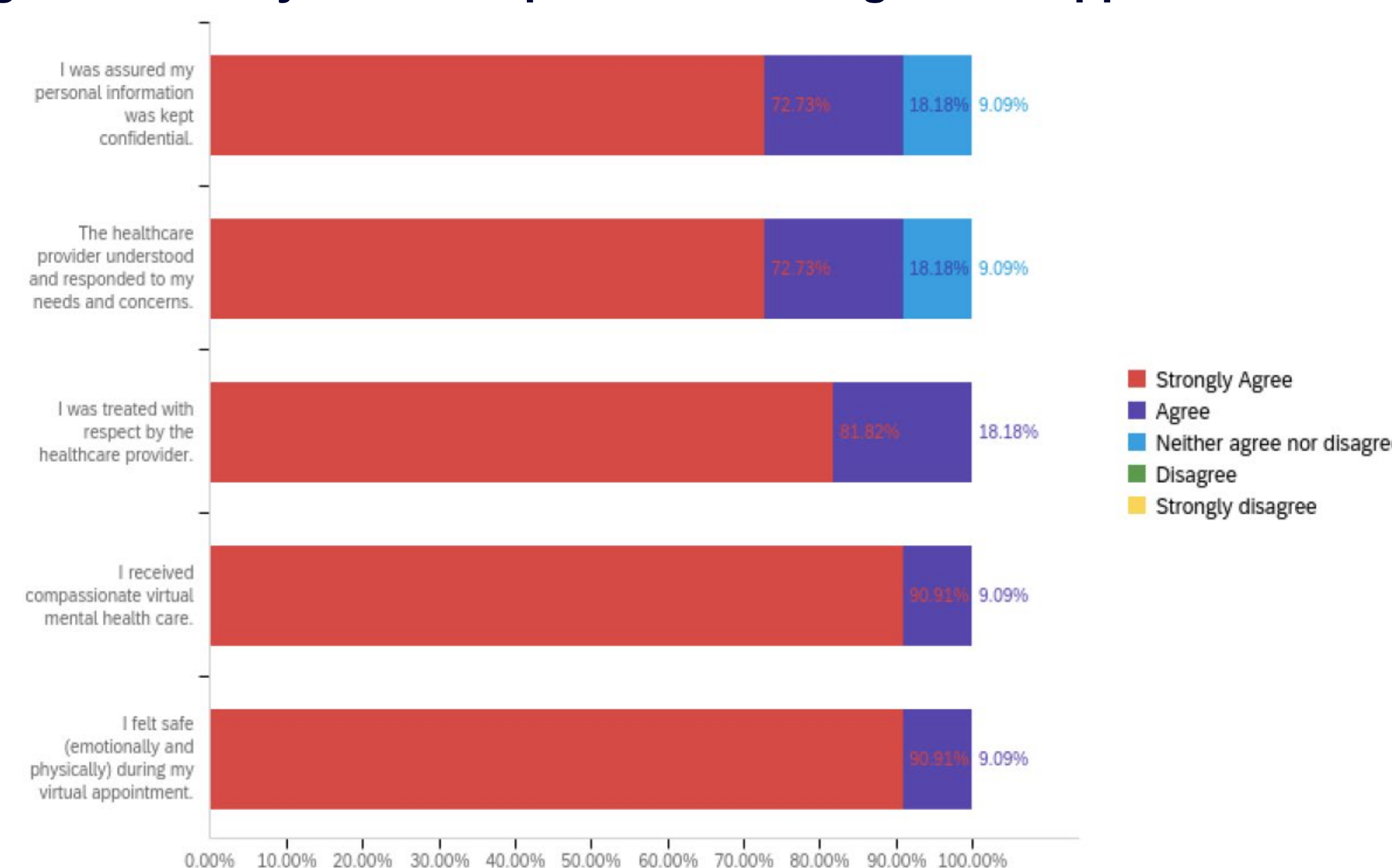
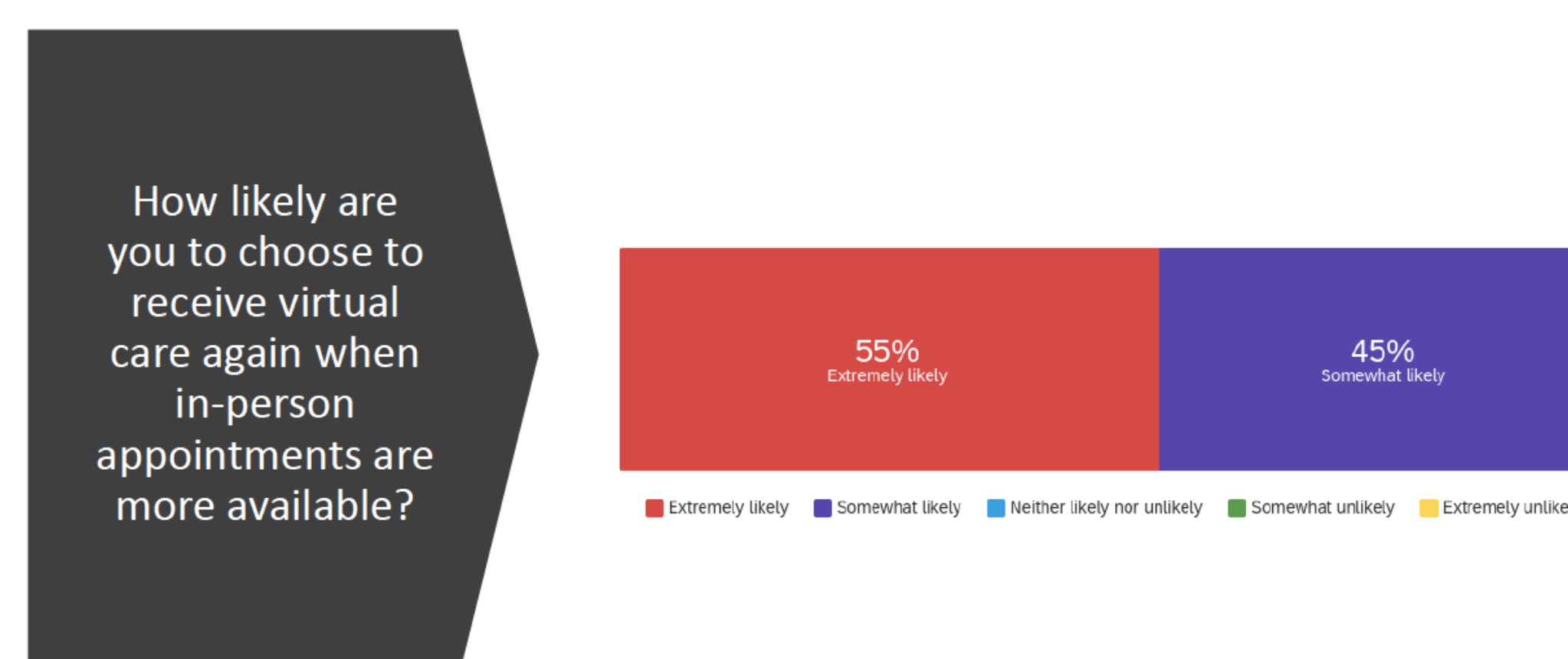


Figure 3. Likelihood of choosing to receive virtual care once in-person appointment is available



Results

- One third (33)% of respondents reported COVID-19 concerns and time-saving opportunities as reasons for choosing virtual care appointments.
- All respondents were satisfied with their virtual care appointments and would choose virtual visits in the future post COVID-19.
- Participants identified that the virtual care experience could be improved by providing advanced email reminders with virtual care links to patients, providing an alternative contact method in the event of connectivity issues, and providing virtual care platform training to clinicians who will be using the system.

Limitations

- These are self reported results from patients who were sufficiently engaged with the clinic to be willing to respond to a feedback survey and who were comfortable enough with technology to respond to an online survey
- This was sent out as a preliminary survey so at this time the sample size is small.

Conclusions

The virtual health experience was satisfactory for all respondents with patients wanting to continue with virtual health care for psychiatry visits. Areas identified for improvement to virtual care practice included reminders for appointments and more support for patients in case of virtual health connection issues and more training for clinicians for technical issues.

Reference / Bibliography

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