

Survey results

Patients' experiences of virtual outpatient care in 2023



The Virtual Care Survey 2023 results reflect the experiences of **2,301 patients** who had at least one virtual care appointment with a public hospital outpatient clinic in NSW in August or September 2023. Virtual care is any interaction between a patient and clinician occurring remotely with the use of information technologies. In the 2023 survey, 80% of patients said they had their most recent virtual care appointment over the telephone and 20% by video call.

Of these 2,301 patients, 67% also had at least one virtual care appointment with a general practitioner (GP) in the 12 months prior to completing the survey and provided additional feedback about their experiences.

This report highlights key findings about patients' virtual care experiences across a range of aspects of care. These findings highlight where NSW results improved or declined compared with the previous survey (2022), NSW trends, and important measures of experience based on evidence and stakeholder input.

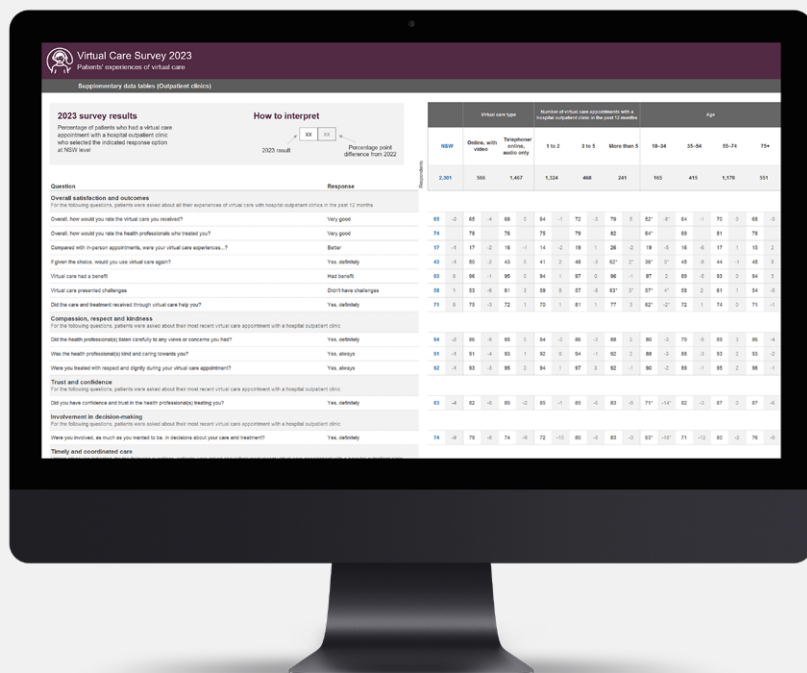
In 2023, 17% of the 14.8 million outpatient services provided by NSW Health were through virtual care, down from 21% in 2022. The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) collects information about patients' experiences of virtual care to gain insights into this model of care and inform the monitoring and evaluation of the *NSW Virtual Care Strategy 2021–2026*.



Interactive data

Supplementary data tables

The supplementary data tables provide detailed results for all survey questions, with breakdowns by selected patient groups and comparisons with the 2022 results.



Related report

Healthcare in Focus

BHI's latest *Healthcare in Focus* report provides insights into patients' use and experiences of virtual care in NSW. It illustrates patterns of virtual care use in recent years and shows how, with what services and in what contexts patients used this model of care between 2020 and 2023. It also explores around 20,000 patients' experiences of virtual care services with NSW public hospital outpatient clinics and general practitioners (GPs), including after discharge from hospital, and factors that influenced positive experiences.



Overview

Most patients were positive about the virtual care they received from hospital outpatient clinics in 2023. Patients are providing increasingly positive ratings of virtual care compared with in-person appointments, and are more likely to say virtual care helped them. While most patients were positive about their interactions with health professionals, there were declines in the percentages of patients who said they were 'definitely' involved in decision-making, and who said they were 'definitely' given enough information to manage their care at home.

Overall satisfaction and outcomes

Most patients (89%) said, overall, the virtual care they received from hospital outpatient clinics in the past 12 months was...



For patients who said 'very good', this result declined by 2 percentage points compared with 2022.

61% of patients said that, when compared with in-person appointments, their virtual care experiences with hospital outpatient clinics in the past 12 months were 'about the same'.

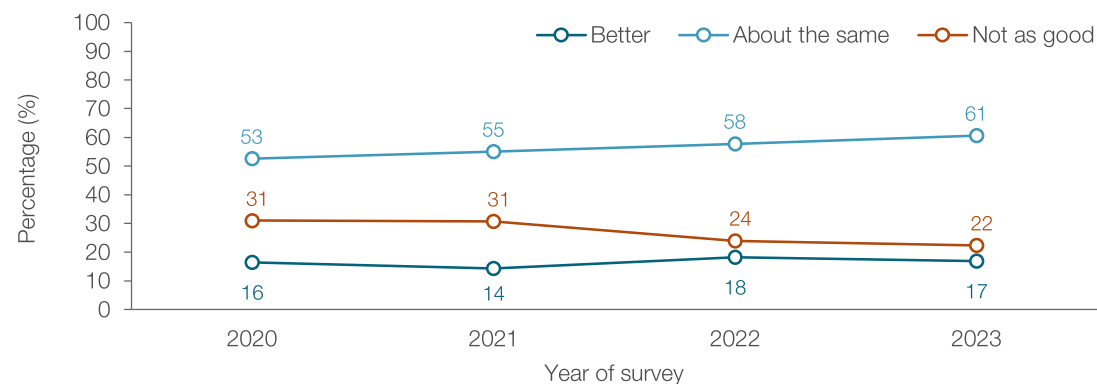
This result has increased consistently over the past 3 years. At the same time, the percentage of patients who said their virtual care experiences were 'not as good' as in-person appointments has decreased.

When patients were asked if, given the choice, they would use virtual care again...



Percentage of patients in NSW who had at least one virtual care appointment with a public hospital outpatient clinic, all response options, 2020 to 2023

Compared with in-person appointments, were your virtual care experiences...?



Overall satisfaction and outcomes

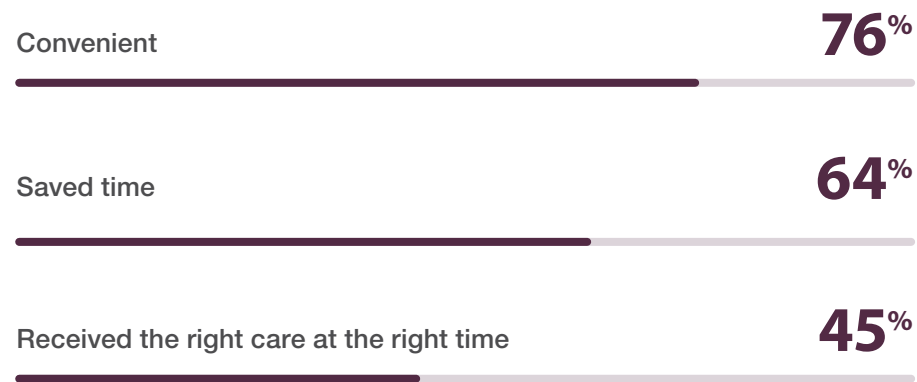
Most patients cited convenience and saving time as benefits of virtual care.

In 2023, 71% of patients said the care and treatment they received through virtual care with hospital outpatient clinics in the past 12 months 'definitely' helped them – unchanged compared with the previous survey (2022) but up from 67% in 2020.

Patients were also asked whether they experienced certain benefits and challenges with their virtual care.

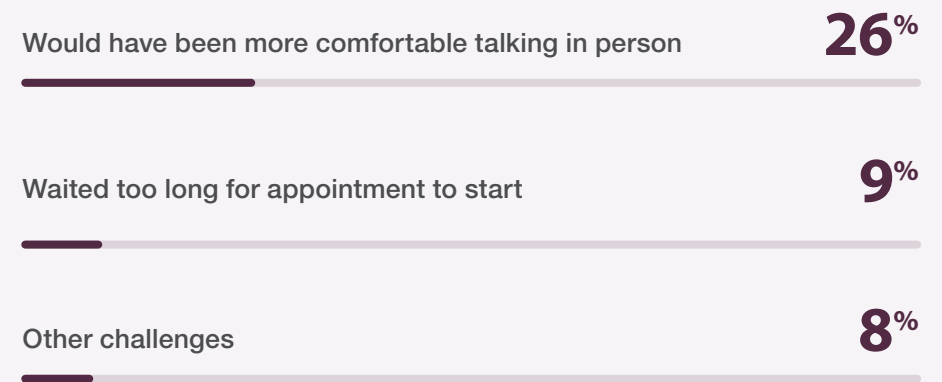
93% of patients cited one or more **benefits** of virtual care.

The most commonly cited were:



42% of patients cited one or more **challenges** with virtual care.

The most commonly cited were:



“ I have chronic fatigue and I’m trying to still work. Getting places is completely exhausting. Telehealth is the BEST THING EVER. ”

“ Sometimes it feels like I’m being rushed through. There’s not much time to process the information I’m given and ask questions, compared with in-person appointments. ”

Compassion, respect and kindness

84% of patients said the health professionals 'definitely' listened carefully to their views and concerns at their most recent virtual care appointment with a hospital outpatient clinic.

This result declined by 2 percentage points compared with 2022.

Percentage of patients in NSW who had at least one virtual care appointment with a public hospital outpatient clinic, all response options, 2023

Did the health professional(s) listen carefully to any views or concerns you had?



▼ Down from 86% in 2022

“ I was treated with respect and honesty, and not talked down to. ”

Trust and confidence

83% of patients said they 'definitely' had confidence and trust in the health professionals treating them at their most recent virtual care appointment with a hospital outpatient clinic.

This result declined by 4 percentage points compared with 2022.

Percentage of patients in NSW who had at least one virtual care appointment with a public hospital outpatient clinic, all response options, 2023

Did you have confidence and trust in the health professional(s) treating you?



▼ Down from 87% in 2022

“ With my specialist, it was obvious they were not prepared and not even sitting at their desk looking at my medical file. I have lost a lot of confidence in this critical medical relationship. ”

Effective communication

87% of patients said the health professional(s) 'always' explained things in a way they could understand at their most recent virtual care appointment with a hospital outpatient clinic.

This result remained relatively stable compared with 2022.

Percentage of patients in NSW who had at least one virtual care appointment with a public hospital outpatient clinic, all response options, 2023

Thinking about the care and treatment at your most recent virtual care appointment, did the health professional(s) explain things in a way you could understand?



▼ Down from 88% in 2022

“ The doctor took the right amount of time to make sure I understood my medication regime moving forward. She was kind, listened and made it clear in what timeframe my next review should be. ”

Clear information

78% of patients said they were 'definitely' given enough information about how to manage their care at home during their most recent virtual care appointment with a hospital outpatient clinic.

This result declined by 5 percentage points compared with 2022.

Percentage of patients in NSW who had at least one virtual care appointment with a public hospital outpatient clinic, all response options, 2023

During your appointment, were you given enough information about how to manage your care at home?



▼ Down from 83% in 2022

“ [The doctor] said if I had any questions to go to my GP and I was cut off. ”

Involvement in decision-making

74% of patients said they were ‘definitely’ involved, as much as they wanted to be, in decisions about their care and treatment at their most recent virtual care appointment with a hospital outpatient clinic.

This result declined by 9 percentage points compared with 2022 – the largest decline of all questions in the 2023 survey.

Percentage of patients in NSW who had at least one virtual care appointment with a public hospital outpatient clinic, all response options, 2023

Were you involved, as much as you wanted to be, in decisions about your care and treatment?



▼ Down from 83% in 2022

“ More information about results [is needed] to allow more involvement in making decisions and help alleviate anxiety. ”

Timely and coordinated care

85% of patients said that, at their most recent virtual care appointment with a hospital outpatient clinic, the health professional was ‘definitely’ adequately prepared.

This result remained relatively stable compared with 2022.

Percentage of patients in NSW who had at least one virtual care appointment with a public hospital outpatient clinic, all response options, 2023

Was the health professional(s) adequately prepared for your appointment?



▲ Up from 84% in 2022

“ I received timely information about test results and I did not have to wait for an appointment. ”

Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Experiences of GP virtual care

Many hospital outpatients also had at least one virtual care appointment with a general practitioner (GP) in the 12 months prior to completing the survey. Of the 2,301 respondents who provided feedback about their experiences of virtual care with public hospital outpatient clinics, 67% also provided feedback about their virtual care experiences with a GP.

Selected results for these respondents are outlined on this page, with detailed results available in the [supplementary data tables](#).

75% of patients said the care and treatment they received from GPs through virtual care in the past 12 months 'definitely' helped them.

This result declined by 2 percentage points compared with 2022.

52% of patients said the opportunity to use virtual care in the past 12 months 'definitely' helped ensure their care was well coordinated between the GP and the hospital outpatient clinic.

This result declined by 7 percentage points compared with 2022.

*This question was asked of a subgroup of respondents who also had at least one virtual care appointment with a GP.

Most patients (92%) said, overall, the virtual care they received from GPs in the past 12 months was...



Percentage of outpatients in NSW who had at least one virtual care appointment with a GP, all response options, 2023

Did the care and treatment received from GPs through virtual care help you?*



▼ Down from 77% in 2022

Percentage of outpatients in NSW who had at least one virtual care appointment with a GP, all response options, 2023

Did the opportunity to use virtual care help ensure that your care was well coordinated between the GP and the hospital outpatient clinic?*



▼ Down from 59% in 2022



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