

Use of Video Conference for Clinical Consultations

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1. Purpose

1.1 NZALS aims to provide patients with prosthetic and rehabilitation care, which facilitates them achieving independent and productive lives. To ensure we provide equitable access to services based on need, NZALS recognises that some services can be provided using video consultation technologies, which can help patients in isolated locations access care more conveniently and help to support patients to access more comprehensive care.

1.2 The purpose of this guideline is to establish:

- the parameters of when video consultation can and cannot be used
- what informed consent process must be followed
- ways to enhance the quality of the consultation
- ways to enhance the security of the consultation

Definitions

1.3 **Clinician:** An NZALS employee who provides direct patient prosthetic or rehabilitative care.

1.4 **Telehealth:** the use of information and video conferencing technologies to deliver health services to a patient and/or transmit health information regarding that patient between two or more locations within New Zealand. This includes site to site videoconferencing, telephone and other devices.

1.5 **Video consultation:** Where a clinician and patient use information and video conferencing technologies to communicate with each other and visual and / or audio information is exchanged in real time, but the clinician and patient are not physically present in the same room.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all employees who provide patient consultations and should be used to ensure video consultation technology is used appropriately and effectively for those patients where accessibility to services would be enhanced without compromising care.

3. Guideline

3.1 Use of video consultation should be done with awareness of its limitations and in a manner that ensures the patient is not put at risk. As part of good professional practice, the Telehealth consultation should be delivered in line with the guidelines set out in Appendix A: Enhancing Quality of the Consultation and Appendix B: NZALS Telehealth Staff Reference Guide. NZALS Telehealth Staff Reference Guide is also available [here](#).

- 3.2 The New Zealand Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers Rights' established the rights of patients and the obligations of health and disability service providers. This Code applies when using video consultation to provide care.
- 3.3 Clinicians are to adhere to their own professional bodies' standards of conduct, Code of Ethics and regulatory requirements when providing care via video consultation.
- 3.4 NZALS clinicians can provide video consultations to patients who require a service from NZALS when appropriate. Clinical staff should use clinical and professional judgement to select appropriate situations and patients that would benefit from utilising video conferencing technology. The following conditions should be met:
- The patient provides their informed consent to receiving care delivered in a video consultation form.
 - The patient is able to access the technology required to enable a video conference.
 - The patient is able to participate in a video consultation. For some patients who have cognitive, visual, auditory, or psychiatric problems video consultations may not be the most appropriate method to provide care and could compromise the patient's care.
 - A physical examination is not required as a key part of the consultation or if a physical examination is required a suitably qualified clinician can complete this assessment and provide the information in a timely manner to the remote clinician who then uses the information to inform their assessment and / or intervention.
- 3.5 NZALS provides Microsoft Teams (preferred platform), Zoom and Skype for Business as the platforms for video-conference consultations.
- 3.6 The video consultation will be between the patient and the remote clinician, with or without family members or a support person present.
- 3.7 The video consultation should not be recorded by the clinician or the patient.
- 3.8 The clinician can use video-conferencing facilities at their nearest Limb Centre, if this is possible. The clinician may also use video-conferencing facilities from a non-NZALS workspace, including their home, if they have the ability to ensure patient privacy is adhered to.
- 3.9 The patient can use video conferencing facilities at their own home, nearest Limb Centre or another health professional's clinic.
- 3.10 When a patient has given informed consent to a video consultation, they should be provided with the [NZALS Telehealth Patient Information Sheet](#).

Informed Consent

- 3.11 Prior to the video consultation appointment, the patient will be given an explanation of what the video consultation will involve and have the opportunity to opt for a face to

face consultation where this is available, or if it is not available have an explanation of the options for accessing the required service.

- 3.12 If services are required and the patient does not wish to participate in a video consultation, then the following options will be considered:
- Telephone consultation
 - Face to face consultation at Limb Centre or Regional Clinic. If staff from other centres are required to travel, prior approval from the clinician's regional manager
 - Referral to an external therapy provider (DHB or ACC).
- 3.13 Informed consent will be obtained prior to the video consultation appointment, adhering to NZALS [Informed Consent Policy](#). For use of video consultation, the following points need to be discussed as part of the informed consent process:
- Explanation of the service that will be provided using the video conference consultation.
 - Explanation of where the video consultation will be delivered from, e.g. private office space at NZALS or private home office space
 - Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Skype for Business transmissions are encrypted and the risk of interception is very low; however, could be a possibility.
 - If applicable, any limitations of the service that can be provided due to the use of video consultation technology compared to a face to face consultation.
 - If applicable the need to use a clinician at the local Centre to conduct a physical examination on behalf of the remote clinician.
 - Roles and responsibilities of team members involved in the consultation.
- 3.14 Acceptance of the video conference diary invite (including disclaimer) is a suitable consent. Ensure a copy of the acceptance email is then added into the patient's electronic clinical record (Manaaki).
- 3.15 Prior to commencing the video consultation, the remote clinician will check the informed consent has been obtained.
- 3.16 At the beginning of the clinical consultation the clinician will re-explain the key points of consent, including the low risk of possible interception that can occur through the software platforms used.

Risk Management

- 3.17 Microsoft Teams the preferred platform for NZALS staff to use for video consultations with patients. Microsoft Teams uses a number of privacy and security controls including data encryption. Detailed information on privacy and security can be found on the [Microsoft website](#).

- 3.18 Zoom and Skype for business are encrypted during transmission and the overall risk of interception is considered to be very low. The New Zealand Telehealth Resource Centre states that while Zoom is not risk-free, the Telehealth Leadership Group supports its use when appropriately implemented ([Zoom Security Advice for Health Providers v3](#)). The same group states the use of Skype for video consultations is currently considered reasonably safe ([Risk Management When Using Skype' guideline 2017](#)). Please refer to these guides for further advice on mitigating risk when using each platform.
- 3.19 The following is strongly recommended to further mitigate any potential risk:
- The clinician will not use the telephone, text chat or file transfer features available on Microsoft Teams, Skype for Business and Zoom during the patient consultation.
 - The clinician will assess the sensitivity of the consultation and help to weigh up the risk of discussion over the video transmission.
 - The clinician will offer the patient the option of muting the video call and then having a telephone conversation to discuss any particular sensitive issues they do not wish to discuss over the video transmission.
- 3.20 As part of good professional practice, the Telehealth consultation should be delivered in line with the guidelines set out in Appendix B: NZALS Telehealth Staff Reference Guide.

4. Specific Responsibilities

Party	Responsibilities
Clinical / Multidisciplinary teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow good professional practice as recommended in section 3. • Providing sufficient information to enable patient to make an informed choice • Obtaining informed consent prior to using video conference for clinical consultations. • Appropriately documenting the diary acceptance / consent in the patient's medical file on Manaaki.
Regional Managers/Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure clinical personnel are aware of their obligations in relation to obtaining consent as set out in this guidance • Report to the CEO if any issues arise
Privacy Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is familiar with current Privacy Legislation and practice • Is available to provide Privacy guidance as required
Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure NZALS has video conference for clinical consultations guidance that meets legal requirements in place and all employees have received adequate training in informed consent.
Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide responsible governance and monitoring of compliance with legal and professional obligations

5. Legal Compliance

- [Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994](#)
- [Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights](#)
- [Protection of Personal and Property Rights Act 1988](#)
- [Care of Children Act 2004](#)
- [New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990](#)
- [Crimes Act 1961](#)
- [Privacy Act 1993](#)
- [Health Information Privacy Code 1994](#)
- [Health Act 1956](#)

6. Related Policies, Procedures and Forms

- [Informed Consent Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct Policy](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Agreement to Receive Services and Consent Form](#)
- [Mobile Device Usage Policy](#)
- [Clinical Governance Policy](#)
- [Medical Device Prescription Policy](#)
- [Internet & Email Use Policy](#)
- [Child Protection Policy](#)
- [NZALS Telehealth Patient Information Sheet](#)
- [NZALS Telehealth Staff Reference Guide](#)

7. Reference Documents and Websites

- [NZ Telehealth Forum & Resource Centre](#)
- [Telehealth NZ: NZTRC Risk Management when using Skype \(2017\)](#)
- [Telehealth NZ: Zoom Security Advice for Health Providers v3](#)

8. Revision History

Author	Version number	Version date	Description of changes
Communications Advisor	1.4	June 2020	Addition of NZALS Copyright.
Special Projects Officer	1.3	May 2020	Addition of hyperlink to NZALS Telehealth Staff Reference Guide.
Special Projects Officer	1.2	May 2020	Updates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telehealth definition • Guidance on patient selection • Use of video conferencing when working remotely • Risk management information for zoom and skype for business • Inclusion of Microsoft Teams • Reference to NZALS Telehealth Patient Information Sheet • Inclusion of Appendix B: NZALS Telehealth Staff Reference Guide
Special Projects Officer	1.1	March 2020	Inclusion of Zoom
Occupational Therapist	1.0	April 2018	New guidance

Appendix A: Enhancing Quality of the Consultation

One of the greatest influencing factors that impact the success of video consultations is the set-up of the room where the video consultation takes place. Managing sound and lighting as well as visual and audible distractions can enhance the quality of the consultation and participant's experience.

The following considerations are recommended as a means to enhance the effectiveness of the consultation.

- **Brightness and contrast:** Use a room where there is good lighting, e.g. fluorescent office lighting is often best. To avoid significant differences in brightness, ensure both the patient and clinician are not positioned in front of a window. The light from the window affects the contrast.
- **Calm background:** Ensure the walls in the field of view are free from extra visual materials / information. Extra visual information increases what the video conferencing unit has to process and can cause the image and sound quality to be affected resulting in a poor transmission. Busy clothing patterns can also impact on the amount of information the video unit needs to process. Plainer clothes and backgrounds are better.
- **Sound:** Positioning of the microphone is essential to improve sound quality. Reduce background noise as well as microphones do not filter this out effectively.
- **Field of view:** Check the field of view prior to the consultation and adjust the camera to ensure all participants can see each other. Also ensure there is nothing in the field of view that could compromise the privacy of any other patient or a NZALS staff member.
- **Position of participants:** Participants should ideally sit close to the camera or close together if there is more than one participant.

Appendix B: NZALS Telehealth Staff Reference Guide ([hyperlink](#))

1. The clinician will contact the patient to:

- Offer video consultation and discuss rationale for this.
- Obtain that patient's informed consent. Consent to cover following aspects:
 - Explain what the video consultation will involve, the platform being used (e.g. Zoom meeting or Skype for Business meeting), expected timeframe for session, and who will be present e.g. other clinicians, external providers.
 - Explain where the video consultation will be delivered from, e.g. private office space at NZALS or private home office space.
 - Explain that there are limitations to providing treatment when face-to-face physical examination is not available.
 - Inform patient that the use of remote consultation is voluntary.
 - Explain that transmissions through software platforms are encrypted and current guidance from NZ Telehealth Centre is that the risk of interception is low, however this could be a possibility.
 - Explain that clinician will write notes in patient's clinical record following video consultation as would normally happen during a face-to-face consultation.
- Confirm if patient would like the meeting invite sent via Zoom or Skype for Business
- Remind patient that if they have any urgent needs prior to video consultation they should contact the NZALS centre as usual.
- Verify the patient's email address by confirming the email address they would like the invite sent to and sending a 'test' email prior to sending appointment invitation.
- Add a copy of the acceptance email into the patient's electronic clinical record (Manaaki) as documentation of consent.

2. Prior to the scheduled video consultation, the clinician will:

- Ensure awareness of local escalation pathway if any wellbeing or safety concerns are identified during the consultation.
- Prepare for the video consultation prior to the call. e.g.
 - Have the patient's phone number on hand in case of technical issues.
 - Appropriate equipment for discussion and demonstration available.
 - Self-management advice and exercise resources available.

3. At the beginning of the video consultation the clinician will:

- Ensure NZALS name badge is visible to the patient during the video consultation and that they are in NZALS uniform.
- Ensure they are wearing headphones (especially if delivering consult from home office) to help protect patient privacy.
- Confirm the identity of the patient to ensure they are speaking with the correct individual. The use of 3 identifiers (e.g. full name, date of birth, address) will be used if it is the first meeting between patient and clinician.
- Confirm that the patient is currently in New Zealand.
- Inform the patient the space they are delivering the consultation from is private and that there is no-one in the room out of their view. Inform patient if consulting from a home office.
- Clarify whether anyone is present in the room with the patient and if so, confirm the patient consents to proceeding with the consultation in the presence of this person(s).
- Inform the patient the video consultation should not be recorded unless both parties' consent to this, and the telephone, message, and file sharing features of Skype for Business or Zoom cannot be used in the session.
- Re-explain the key points of consent, including:
 - The low risk of possible interception that can occur through software platforms
 - Explain limitations of the service that can be provided with video consultation technology compared to a face to face consultation
- Explain that the patient does not need to answer any question they may feel uncomfortable to discuss in a video conference format, and there are alternatives including muting the video call to have a telephone conversation or having a telephone conversation at another scheduled time. Agree on the way a patient can communicate to clinician that they do not wish to continue e.g. just say to me that you will give me a call or raise your hand and we can stop.

4. During the video consultation the clinician will:

- Discuss limitations of video consultation to address an issue if these are encountered during the consult.
- Ensure the patient is aware of the correct method to get in touch with further enquiries or additional questions after the appointment.
- Summarise the agreed plan and what resources (if any) will be sent through to the patient.
- Document clinical notes in patient's electronic clinical record (Manaaki) as per usual process, specifying this was a video consultation and the software platform used. Attach Digital Health Checklist to appointment in Manaaki.