

# **Would you like to take part in research to help design online appointments using Skype?**

## **Information sheet for participants during outpatient clinic appointments**

### **Study title: VOCAL - Virtual Online Consultations: Advantages and Limitations**

#### **Invitation and brief summary**

We are a research team from Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Oxford and Barts Health NHS Trust. We are studying whether Skype can make appointments with clinicians more convenient and more helpful for patients. We don't yet know whether the technology is right for this purpose so we are trying it with a small number of volunteers to see how it affects the interaction between patients and their clinician.

#### **Purpose of and background to the research**

Our research team, which is led by a GP, is looking at the way in which online communications technology can help conduct clinical consultations remotely. We know that visiting the hospital for appointments can often be time-consuming or inconvenient and we would like to offer a way of "attending" these appointments by Skype. However we need to be sure that these Skype appointments are at least as good as a face-to-face appointment when it comes to the standard of care patients receive.

In order to understand the potential advantages or disadvantages of Skype consultations, we are conducting a detailed study of the patient-clinician interaction during consultations via Skype. In addition, we are observing standard face-to-face consultations in the clinic in order to compare the two modes of interaction, and see how the technology can potentially influence discussions.

With your permission, we would like to observe one of your face-to-face consultations in the outpatient clinic. You don't have to agree to be part of this research. If you decide not to take part it won't affect your care.

#### **What would taking part involve?**

Participation in the study will involve a researcher being physically present during one of your consultations at the clinic. You and your clinician will decide together when the researcher can attend your consultation.

We want to study what happens during the consultation, and what topics are discussed. With your permission, the researcher would like to audio record your consultation using a dictaphone. The audio recordings will be anonymised and your name and any other identifying information will be "bleeped".

**What are the benefits to taking part?**

You will not benefit directly from the findings of the study, though we hope that the study will help us understand how Skype can be used to support and enhance care of patients.

**What are the potential disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

We understand that your consultation is private, and that sensitive topics may be discussed. It is completely up to you when the researcher attends one of your consultations. You can also decide for sections of the audio recording to be erased after the consultation has taken place. Participation in this study will not affect your standard care.

**Why have I been invited?**

You have been invited to participate because your doctor or nurse has identified you as someone who might wish to do so.

**Do I have to take part?**

No. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you can change your mind about taking part even after the study has begun.

**What do I do next?**

If you would like to be involved in the study, please read the consent form and sign it.

**Is it confidential?**

All information you give is completely confidential. We won't tell anyone that you are speaking to us, though you are welcome to tell them yourself. All information will be held securely in strictest confidence. The data will be stored with its own unique identifying code and not with the participant's name or corresponding linkage details, which will be stored separately. Only those directly involved in the research will have access to the data.

**Who is funding the study?**

The study is funded by The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) under the Health Services and Delivery Research Programme, which aims to improve the quality, accessibility and organisation of health services in the UK.

**Further information**

The study team is led by Professor Trisha Greenhalgh, a medical doctor at University of Oxford who is also custodian of the study information. The other members of the team are Shanti Vijayaraghava (Diabetes Consultant), Satya Bhattacharya (Consultant General and Surgeon), Joanne Morris (Research Manager), Sara Shaw (Researcher), Emma Byrne (Researcher) and Joe Wherton (Researcher).

Thank you for your help!

The VOCAL research team