

## **Research Study: VOCAL (Virtual Online Consultations: Advantages and Limitations)**

### **About the study**

We are a research team from Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry and Barts Health NHS Trust. We are studying whether Skype can make appointments with patients more convenient and more helpful.

We are looking at the way in which online communications technology can be used in two clinical areas: diabetes and cancer surgery. The study is being conducted within Barts Health NHS Trust at Newham Hospital and the Royal London Hospital.

We know that visiting the hospital for appointments can often be time-consuming or inconvenient for patients and we would like to offer a way for them to “attend” 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.

In order to understand the potential advantages or disadvantages of Skype consultations, we are conducting a detailed study of the patient-clinician interaction through such technology. In addition, we are speaking with service staff to understand and implement the organisational change required to support the use of Skype consultations.

### **What will be involved?**

A researcher will visit you at your department to undertake a naturalistic interview - that is, asking you on the job what you are doing and why you are doing it, as well as collecting any key documentation such as standard operating procedures and guiding notes that help you do your job.

We may also ask you to attend workshops with other staff members to discuss findings from the research and your views about how they relate to service processes and care practice.

### **What do I do next?**

If you would like to be involved in the study, please write your name and contact details on the consent form and sign it.

### **Is it confidential?**

All information you give is completely confidential. We may ask to audio record the interviews but it is completely up to you as to whether we record it or not.

### **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.

### **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.

**Where do I get more information?**

The study team is led by Professor Trisha Greenhalgh, a medical doctor at Barts 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