

# Practical tips for remote consulting with students in primary care

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GPs and Community Clinical Tutors

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# Focus of workshop

- Consider how to maximise the educational potential of remote consultations for students
- Consider technical aspects that might improve facilitation of remote consultations



# Learning Outcomes

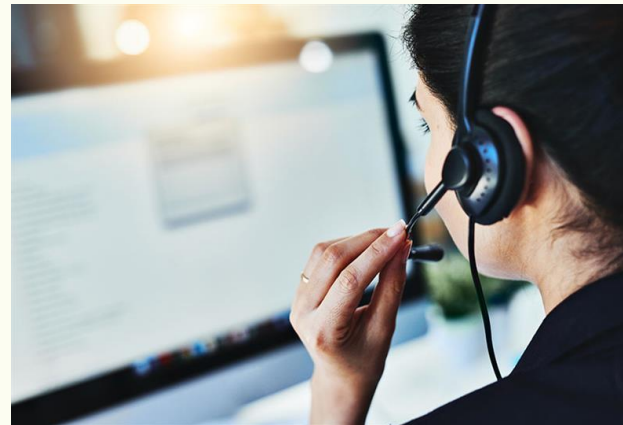
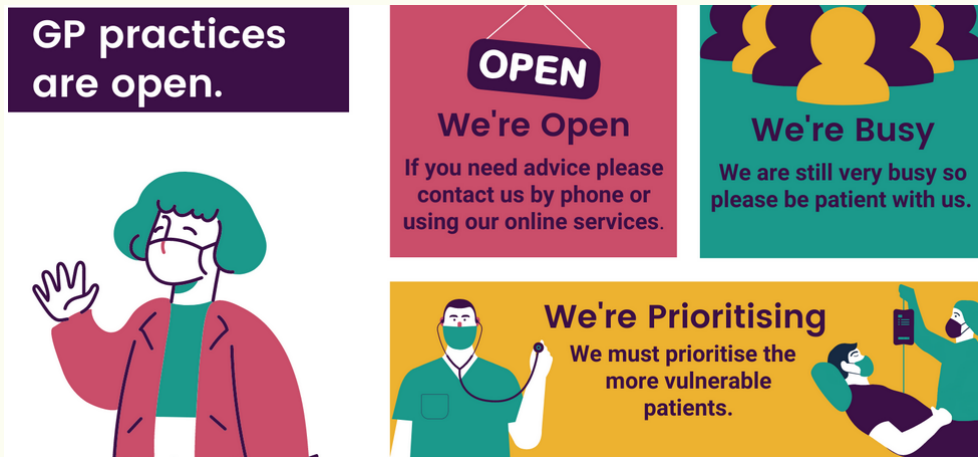
1. Discuss educational benefits and challenges of remote consultations.
2. Consider opportunities for increasing student involvement in remote consultations and maximising their learning experience.
3. Review guidance supporting remote consultations.
4. Consider technical elements to support remote consultations.
5. Share practical tips for remote consulting with students.

# What has been your experience of the educational benefits and challenges of involving students in remote consultations?

- Please add your comments & thoughts to 'chat' or just tell us what you think

# Remote consulting – change in practice

- What does a post-Covid primary care placement look like?



#### References:

Balaji, A. and Clever, S. Lou (2021) 'Incorporating Medical Students Into Primary Care Telehealth Visits: Tutorial', *JMIR Medical Education*, 7(2), p. e24300. doi: 10.2196/24300.

Pourmand A, Ghassemi M, Sumon K, Amini SB, Hood C, Sikka N. Lack of telemedicine training in academic medicine: Are we preparing the next generation? *Telemed J E Health* 2021 Jan;27(1):62-67. [doi:10.1089/tmj.2019.0287] [Medline: 32294025]

#### Image references:

<https://www.gponline.com/telephone-triage-non-covid-19-patients-during-pandemic/article/1680389>

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/news/2020/05/leah-crabtree-covid-experience.page>

<https://www.linclmc.co.uk/generalpracticeinfographics>

# Much to gain from remote consultations

- Improved appreciation of history taking
- Development of consultation and communication skills
- New intellectual skill – clinical decision making development
- More efficient?
  - pick more appropriate patients
  - wider range of conditions
- Video alternatives to Home Visits – social context of health & illness

# What do students think about it?

## Remote consultations in primary care during the COVID-19 pandemic: student perspectives

The widespread adoption of telephone triage within primary care during the COVID-19 pandemic has provided medical students an opportunity to further develop verbal consultation skills. As a result, the future primary care workforce will be more prepared to make use of technology in facilitating remote consultations when appropriate.

Despite this rewarding outcome, there remain unanswered questions regarding the impact of this rapid change in how patients access primary care services, particularly on patient care, patient experience, and medical education. In reference to the latter, we are most concerned by the potential negative impact of reduced opportunities for current medical students to practise their clinical examination and non-verbal communication skills.

Reference: Cliona Mulvihill, Josephine Cooper, Josh Pavey, Jean-Pierre Laake. Remote consultations in primary care during the COVID-19 pandemic: student perspectives. Postgraduate Medical Journal. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/postgradmedj-2020-139149>

# Aims for students

- Authentic patient encounters
- Experiential learning about core primary care problems
- Develop consulting skills – ‘Preparation for Practice’
- Awareness of varying routes for patient access and benefits / challenges of each

Reference: MB16 GP Teacher guide. Teaching remote consulting to medical students. Bristol School of Medicine. <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/primaryhealthcare/documents/teaching/year-5/teacher-remote-consulting-guide.pdf>



# Finding opportunities

- Ask reception to inform all patients / consent patients on booking
- Select patients from appointment book that are likely to need TCI for F2F so student can follow the patient journey & examine patient.
- Involve students with review of e-consultations (photos) / letters / labs
- Sit in / observe vs independent consult (direct / indirect supervision)
- Video calls with harder to reach groups eg NH

# How to do it well?

Considerations:

1. Governance
2. Technical
3. Pedagogical
4. Pastoral

# Governance

- Consent (without pressure)
  - Info on website / recorded message
  - AccuRx message to patient with enabled reply - yes/no
- Introductions and identification
- Confidentiality
  - Environment
  - No identifiable patient details in notes taken

# Technical

- Students will need introduction to software & clinical systems
- Will need access to appropriate hardware - devices need to be secure
- Speakerphone and splitters useful for phone calls with students
- Ensure patient is somewhere quiet
- If using own mobile phone – remind students to block caller ID

# Pedagogy

- Engage students to be active contributors to conversation
- Build up: active observing → student consulting with observation → student consulting independently
- Supervision – direct / indirect
- Preparation for patient encounter
- Post consultation discussion

# Pastoral

- Check-in with student
- Ensure the student has enough time / block some of your time for discussions and debrief
- Think about how remote consulting is different for the doctor and discuss how we mitigate any negative impacts

Regular breaks, keep moving and self care

Discuss potential for cognitive overload and decision fatigue

# Guidance:



Students attending remote consultations  
Advice to medical schools and students

October 2020



## Guidance for students on taking part in remote consultations

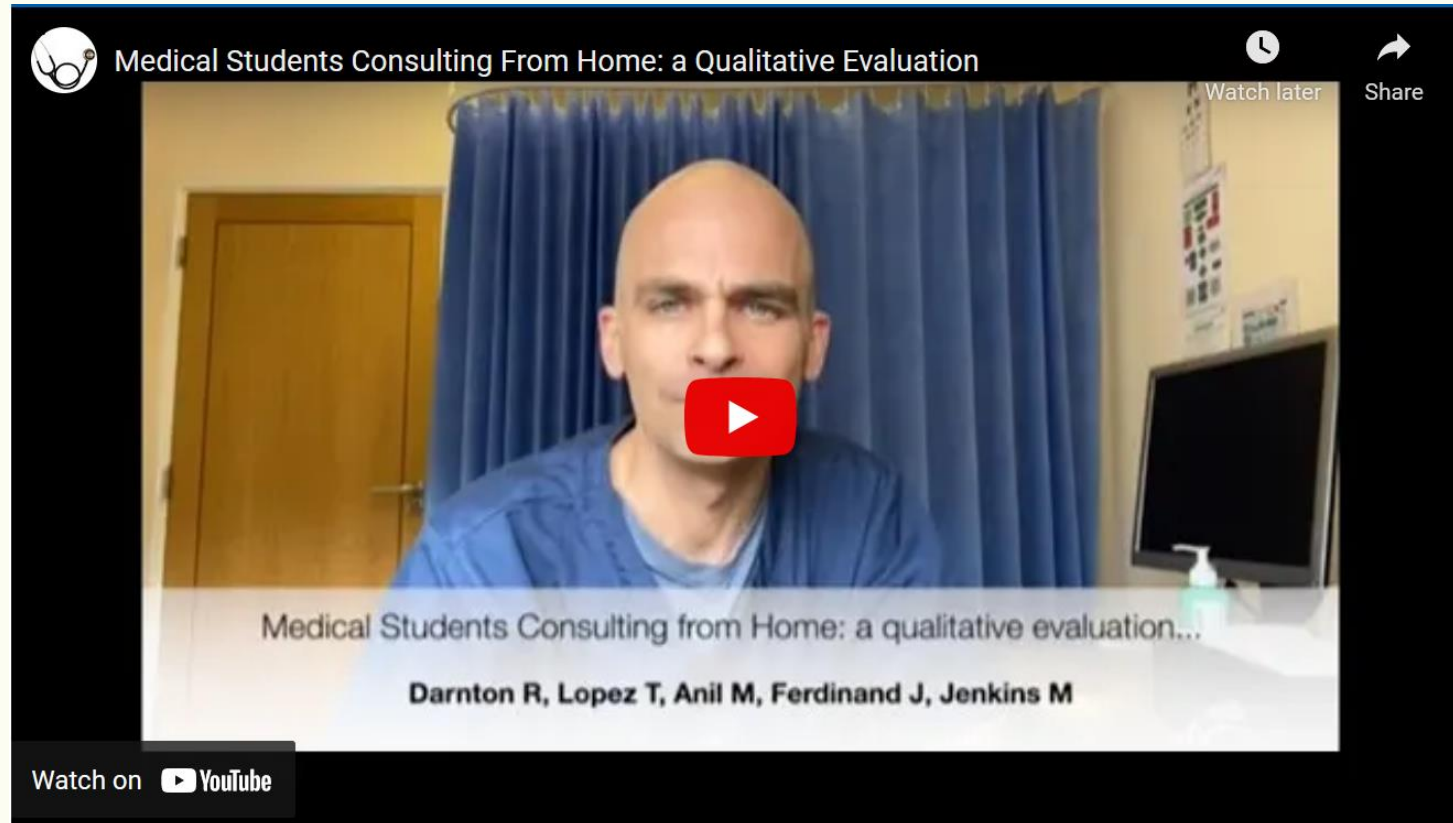
- You must ensure any personal computers and devices – laptops, tablets, phones – are secure before accessing identifiable patient data. An IT professional will be able to advise you on the security of your device.
- You must ensure that your internet connection is private and secure;
  - Public networks must not be used - airports, libraries, coffee shops, restaurants, for example
  - Private networks may be used – Wi-Fi networks in your home, for example – provided they are secure
  - The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) has provided advice on [Wi-Fi security](#)
- You must not access identifiable information about a patient where you can be overheard or interrupted, such as:
  - a public place – café, restaurant, shop, park, etc
  - external or outdoor spaces
  - a shared area or communal area of a private residence – lounge, stairway – where you are likely to be disturbed or others may be present
- If possible, you should try and find a quiet, private room from which to join remote consultations.
- You should wear headphones to listen to content wherever possible.
- If you are joining a consultation through a video platform you should dress professionally as you would for a normal placement.
- When joining a video consultation you should also ensure the background behind you is neutral; using digital backgrounds can help you to do this.
- You should never make a private recording of any remote consultation or online learning opportunity you take part in.
- You must not disclose or discuss personal identifiable information about patients on social media or by private means with a third party e.g. through WhatsApp.
- Personal notes relating to learning sessions must not include identifiable patient data.
- Where in doubt, you must exercise extreme caution and discretion in handling identifiable patient data.
- You must raise concerns in a confidential, non-judgemental way about fellow students, clinicians, lecturers or staff who fail to observe the rules outlined above or who behave in a manner likely to result in an improper disclosure of patient information.

Image reference:

MSC Students attending remote consultations. Advice to medical schools and students.  
<https://www.medschools.ac.uk/media/2788/students-attending-remote-consultations-advice-to-medical-schools-and-students.pdf>



# Medical students consulting from home



<https://www.phpc.cam.ac.uk/p/cu/medical-students-based-at-home-can-be-trusted-to-consult-remotely-with-patients-qualitative-evaluation-of-pilot-at-the-university-of-cambridge/>

Reference: R Darnton et al. Medical students consulting from home: A qualitative evaluation of a tool for maintaining student exposure to patients during lockdown. Medical teacher. October 2020. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0142159X.2020.1829576>



# Medical students consulting from home

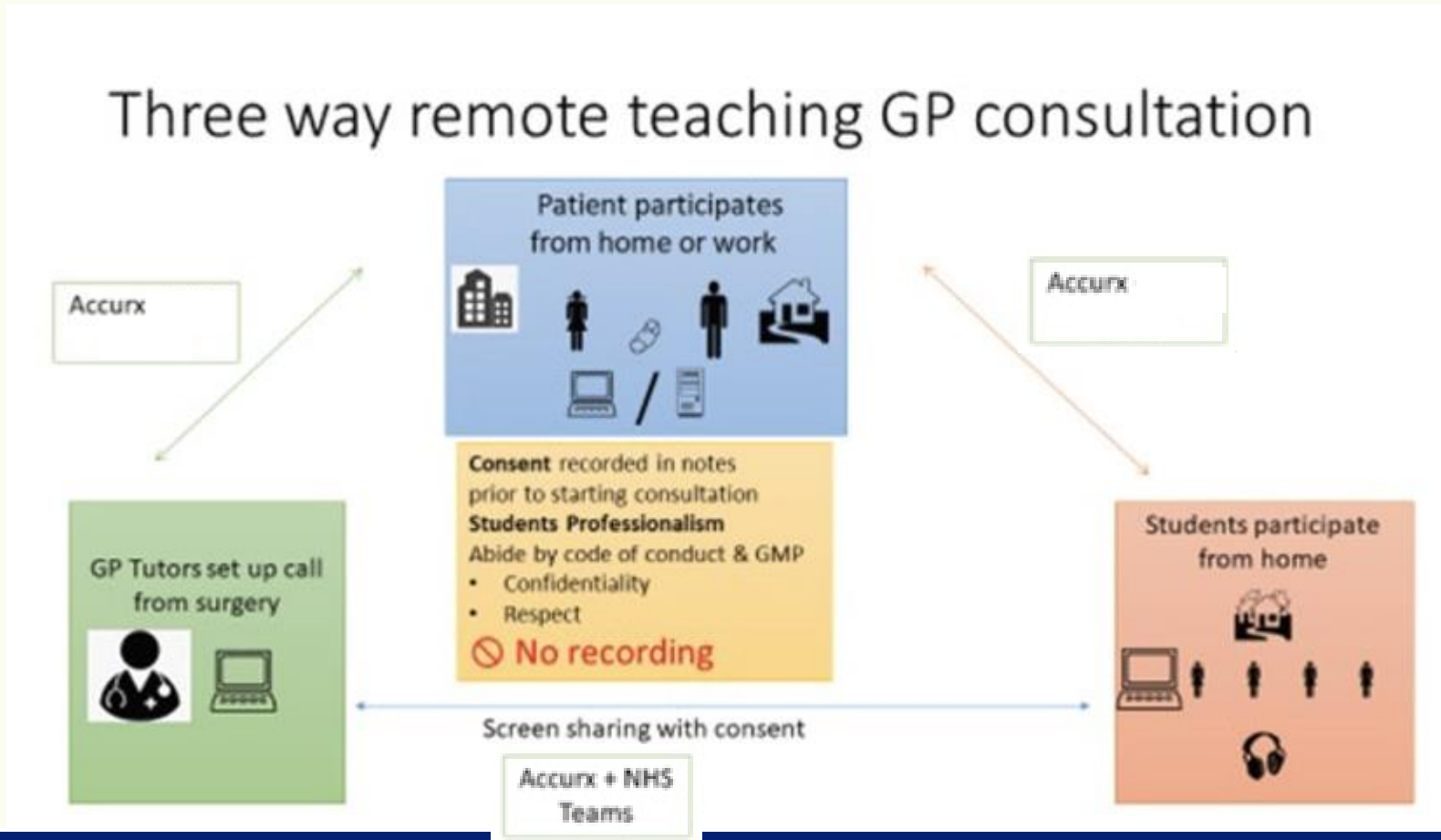
“ Our study suggests that, although remote consultation does present some new practical and educational challenges for students and supervisors, these challenges can be overcome if educators take careful steps to address them.

Some experienced clinicians may feel nervous about letting medical students enter ‘remote consultation territory’ for the first time. To these clinicians, the results of our study should provide some reassurance. For example, none of the doctors interviewed expressed any concerns in retrospect about having given students supervised access to their patients in this manner.

Our study also shows how seriously the medical students treated the professional responsibilities associated with consulting from home.”

– Dr Richard Darnton, lead researcher and Director, General Practice Education Group at the University of Cambridge

# 3 way remote consultation supervision.



Reference:

CBME Virtual teaching.  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/11QN5efwBoulU4YLOJyRCkdXCDNPdhhF5M-amc9zLX9I/edit>

Original image from Barts and The London site above, amended to demonstrate a 3 way Accurx call.

# NHSTeams & AccuRx to support students

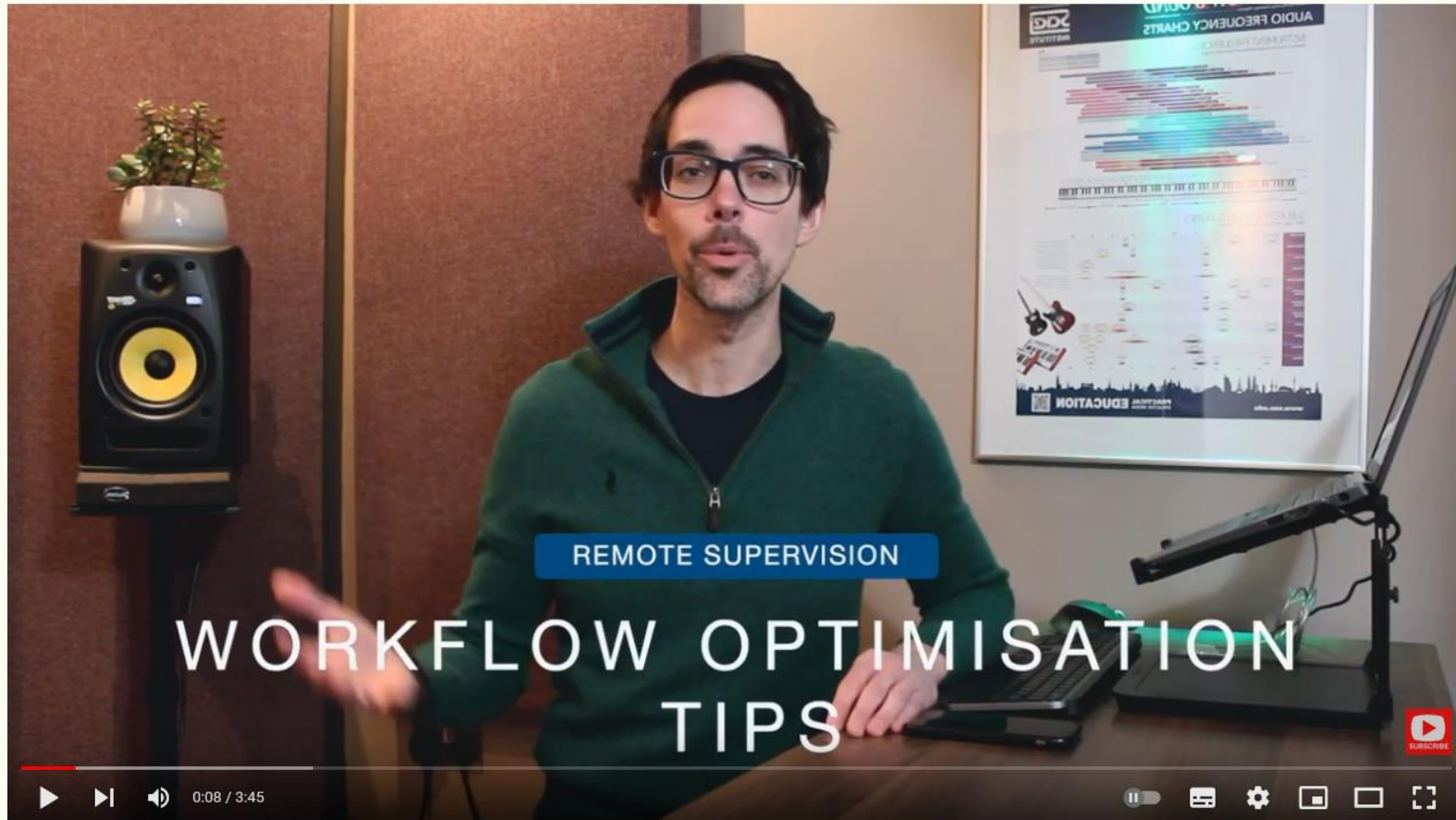


Image reference and link to video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrq4uslybAo>

# Specific cautions for any consulting outside of the Practice / from home:

- Consent – specific
- Confidentiality - private area / headphones / secure network & device
- Supervision - **requires same level of supervision as if in practice**
- Needs of patients - particularly special groups

# What practical tips would you share with GP supervisor colleagues?

- Please add your ideas and suggestions to the padlet link below:

<https://padlet.com/stick/bcf0g55bj8d7w9s0>

# Summary

- Developing competencies in remote consulting will be an essential skill for our graduating student doctors future practice.
- Consent, confidentiality and supervision essential - MSC Guidance.
- Simple measures can make a big difference to student experience.



# Summary – Reminder of how to do it well

- Can they hear the conversation? - Splitter / speakerphone
- Do they understand the context of contact? – Notes/ summarise
- Are they actively involved? – Ask student to start conversation / Qs
- Are they using clinical reasoning? – Involve them in decisions
- Are they learning? – Prep, debrief and feedback
- Can you maximise opportunities? – Ask reception to consent on booking

# References & useful resources:

- Balaji, A. and Clever, S. Lou (2021) 'Incorporating Medical Students Into Primary Care Telehealth Visits: Tutorial', JMIR Medical Education, 7(2), p. e24300. doi: 10.2196/24300. <https://mededu.jmir.org/2021/2/e24300>
- Cannon P, Lumsden L & Wass V (2021): An innovative and authentic way of learning how to consult remotely in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Education for Primary Care, DOI: 10.1080/14739879.2021.1920476 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33913401/>
- Darnton R et al. Medical students consulting from home: A qualitative evaluation of a tool for maintaining student exposure to patients during lockdown. Medical teacher. October 2020. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0142159X.2020.1829576>
- MSC guidance: <https://www.medschools.ac.uk/media/2788/students-attending-remote-consultations-advice-to-medical-schools-and-students.pdf>
- Pourmand A, Ghassemi M, Sumon K, Amini SB, Hood C, Sikka N. Lack of telemedicine training in academic medicine: Are we preparing the next generation? Telemed J E Health 2021 Jan;27(1):62-67. [doi:10.1089/tmj.2019.0287] [Medline: 32294025] <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/epub/10.1089/tmj.2019.0287>
- CBME – Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry. <https://sites.google.com/view/cbme-videoteachingwebsite/home>
- MB16 GP Teacher guide. Teaching remote consulting to medical students. Bristol School of Medicine. <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/primaryhealthcare/documents/teaching/year-5/teacher-remote-consulting-guide.pdf>




# Liverpool Educators Online

- Access resources, support and useful information for supporting our students on the School of Medicine's MBChB programme. Everything you used to find in GPORT – and more!



[liverpool.ac.uk/medicine/liverpool-educators-online](https://liverpool.ac.uk/medicine/liverpool-educators-online)



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### Guidance for the involvement of student doctors in remote consultations.

New ways of working during 2020-21 have resulted in a significant amount of healthcare contacts occurring remotely via telephone or video consultations. There is a lot for our student doctors to learn from these experiences and a need for them to develop confidence in these types of consultations to ensure that they are prepared for their future practice. This guidance is intended to support supervisors and clinical staff to engage student doctors in learning within remote consultations.

Student doctors may be involved in remote consultations within Hospital Trust Practice premises.

If student doctors are joining consultations remotely from their own home, it is important that appropriate consideration of information governance issues has adequately addressed.

In all situations patient consent and confidentiality must be assured.

The guidance outlined below is based on:

- Medical Schools Council Oct 2020 – Students attending remote consultation, schools and students
- General Medical Council 2016 - Achieving good medical practice: guidance for

Consent:

- Patients must consent to student presence and involvement in a remote they would for a face to face consultation.
- Patients must be given time to consider giving their consent, to avoid u being placed upon them
- Patients can be informed of the potential for student involvement prior t consultation via a number of possible routes:
  - Statement in appointment letters/ emails / texts to inform patients th be present during clinics and that consent would be sought before s consultation.
  - Information on webpages regarding student doctor training in the Pr Consent could be sought verbally and documented by support staff pri consultation and confirmed by the supervising doctor before the consu

Last updated: 07 October 2021  
Due for review: July 2021

### Guidance for student doctors on taking part in remote consultations

New ways of working during 2020-21 have resulted in a significant amount of healthcare contacts occurring remotely via telephone or video consultations. There is a lot for our student doctors to learn from these experiences. We hope to support you to develop confidence in these types of consultations to ensure that you are prepared for your future practice as doctors.

#### Top tips for being a student involved in a remote consultation

1. Ensure that the device and internet connection you are using is secure and private.
2. Ensure that you are in a quiet private room where you will not be overheard or interrupted.
3. Use headphones if possible
4. Dress professionally as you would for face to face clinical encounters
5. Use neutral or professional backgrounds; digital backgrounds may help you to achieve this.
6. Never record any part of a remote consultation or clinical encounter
7. Never disclose or discuss patient identifiable data on social media or through a third party eg WhatsApp
8. Ensure that any personal notes you make do not include any patient identifiable data
9. If you have any concerns about the handling of patient identifiable data, please ensure that you raise your concerns in a confidential manner to your supervisor and using a "Sharing Concerns" form.
10. Ensure that patients have consented to your involvement and are fully informed about your role and presence.
11. Do not engage in intimate clinical history or examination during a remote consultation.
12. Discuss any concerns or clinical issues with your supervisor.

References:  
[Medical Schools Council, October 2020. Students attending remote consultations: Advice to medical schools and students.](#)  
[GMC, 2016. Achieving good medical practice: guidance for students.](#)

Any questions?

Thank you.

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