Comments on: A pilot study on the perspectives of pediatric ophthalmologists and their patients towards online consultation during COVID-19 lockdown in India

Dear Editor,

We read with interest the article by Kothari et al.[1] In their survey of pediatric ophthalmologists (POs), the response rate was 43%, with more females (61.5%) respondents. When the authors mention “e-consultation,” did they refer to it as email consultation? This was not clear in their article. Did they ascertain the reason why this was preferred over video consultation, which offers real-time examination though the camera and more connect with the patient? Interestingly, 60% of their patients preferred video consultation over “e-consultation”. An insight into the different diagnoses made during their video consultations would help other practitioners. For first time consultations – how accurate was the diagnosis and were there entirely new visits or follow up patients who opted for their first teleconsultation?

We have been doing teleconsultations for our pediatric patients for over 2 months through our customized application, which can be downloaded from the App store™ or the Google Play store™.[2] This application allows uploading of patient documents and photographs prior to the consultation, which aids in diagnosis and further management. Our pediatric patient profile for teleconsultations includes allergic conjunctivitis, blepharitis, hordeolum, squints, and some cases of congenital cataract. Even ex-premies screened for retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) can undergo cortical vision impairment and binocular vision abnormalities assessment with appropriate therapy online. Follow-up of previously operated squint and cataract surgeries and lasered ROP babies was also done through the application. Paediatric teleconsultations are particularly challenging as children can get distracted easily and hence a challenge for the PO to come to an accurate diagnosis at times. With advancing technology and improved applications, it is possible for the parents to do small assessments at home prior to the consultation to make it more comprehensive.

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Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

Srinivasan Sanjay, Chaitra Jayadev¹, Anand Vinekar², Arushi Garg³, Rohit Shetty⁴

Departments of Uvea and Ocular Immunology, ¹Retina, ²Paediatric Retina and ³Cornea and Refractive Surgery, Narayana Nethralaya, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Correspondence to: Dr. Srinivasan Sanjay, Consultant, Department of Uvea and Ocular Immunology, Narayana Nethralaya, Bangalore, Karnataka, India. E-mail: sanjaygroup24@gmail.com

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