

The use of telehealth in attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: a survey of parents and caregivers

Summary of findings



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Survey Information



What was the aim of the survey?

The aim of the survey was to explore parents' and caregivers' perspectives of the use telehealth for children and adolescents with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

What is telehealth?

We define telehealth as phone and video appointments between a healthcare provider and a parent and/or child with ADHD.



Who conducted the study?

The study was led by Emer Galvin, a PhD researcher at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI). The study received ethical approval from RCSI.

When was the survey conducted?

The survey was conducted in July and August 2023.
The survey was advertised by ADHD Ireland.



Survey Findings



Who took part in the survey?

112 participants



87%
female



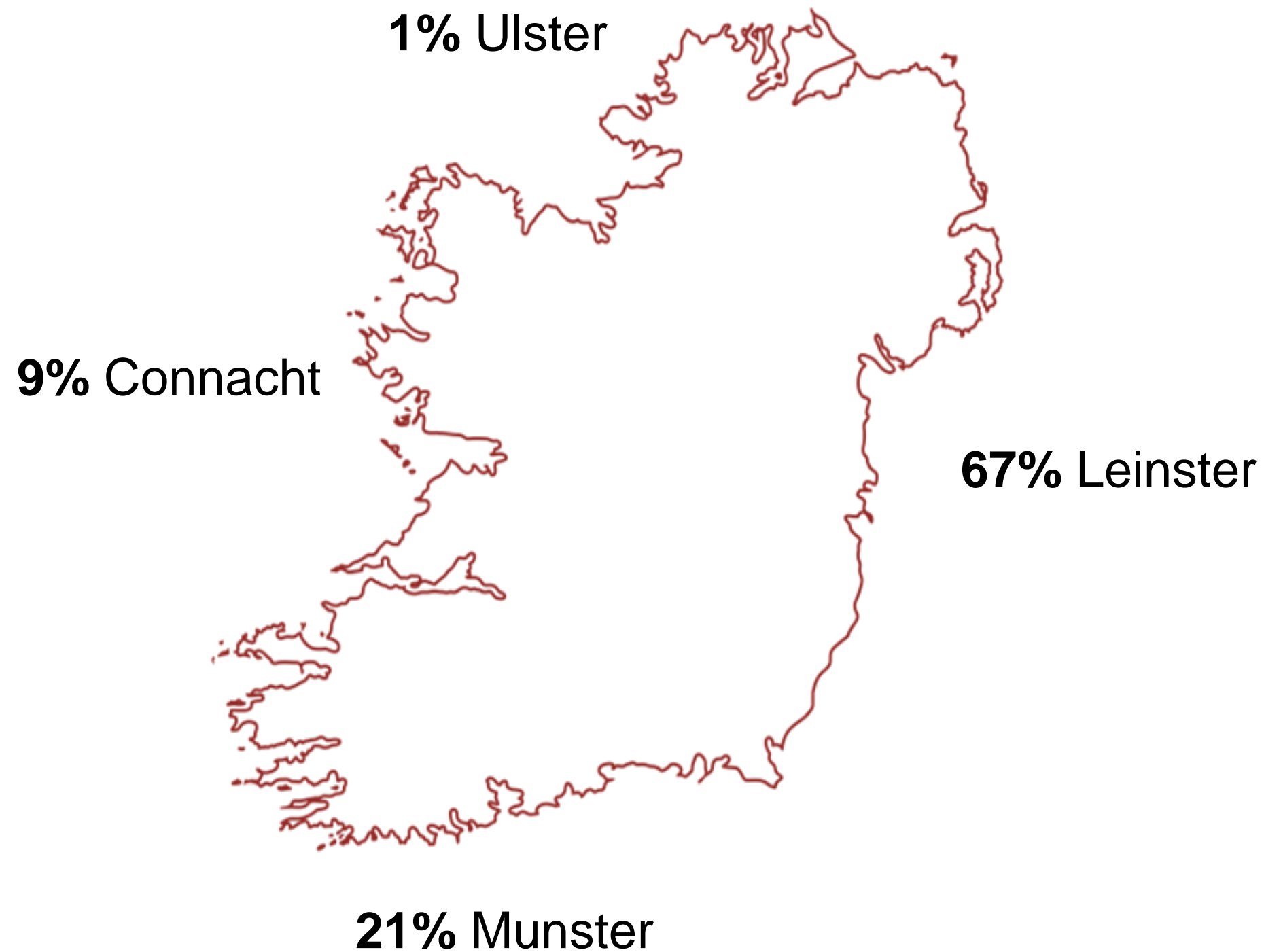
57%
aged 45 - 54



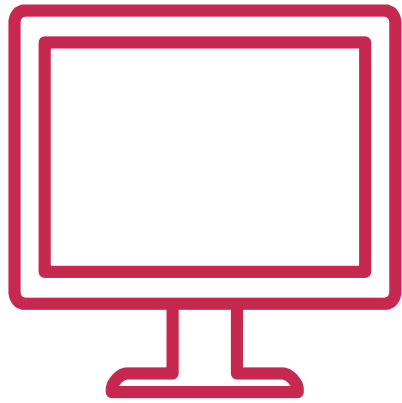
20%
parents diagnosed
with ADHD



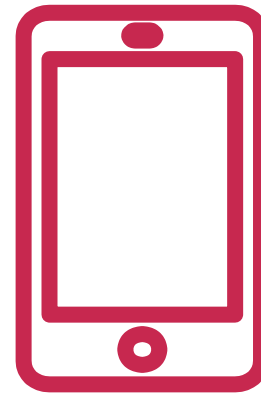
Where were the participants from?



The participants reported being familiar with technology



100%
had access to at
least one
technological
device



96%
accessed the
internet at least
several times a
day



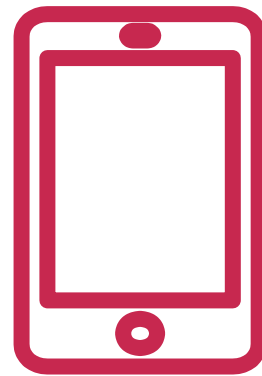
74%
Used video
platforms (e.g.
Zoom) at least
once a week



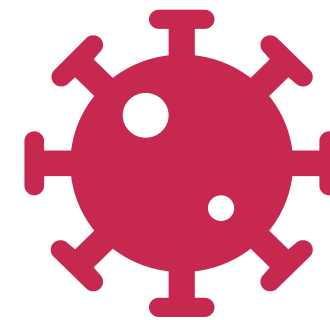
What kind of experience did participants have with telehealth?



55%
had experience with
telehealth for
healthcare
appointments



55%
had experience
with telehealth for
ADHD
appointments



15%
had used
telehealth before
the pandemic

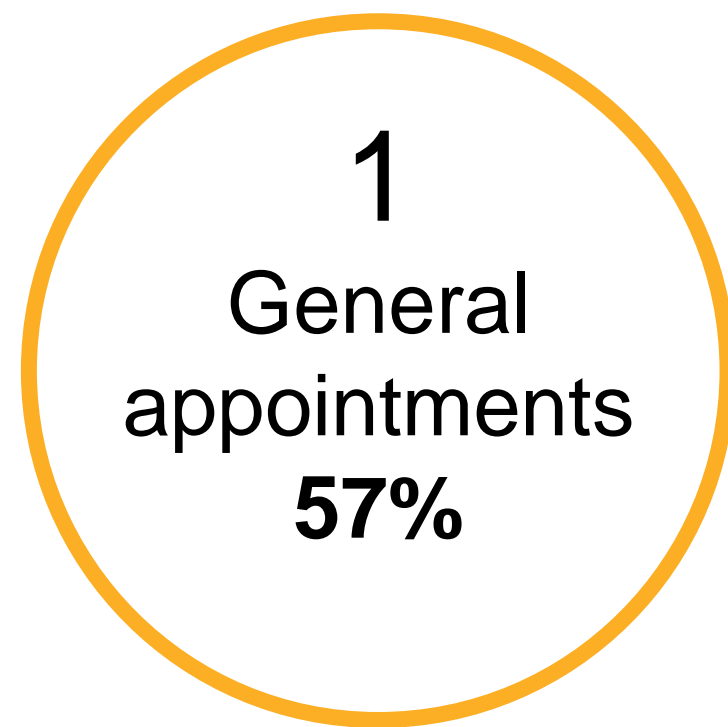


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Of the 61 participants with experience of telehealth...

Telehealth was most often used for:



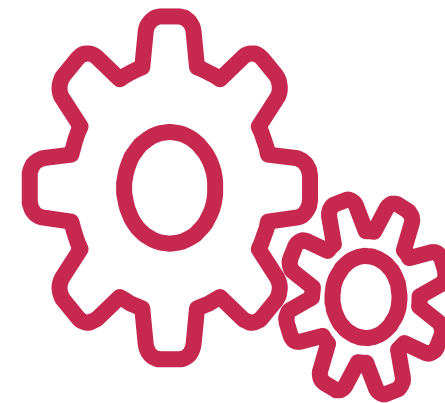
Of the 61 participants with experience of telehealth...



59% were satisfied with telehealth



51% rated the quality poorer than in-person visits




71% found telehealth easy to use




71% were satisfied with the privacy/security of telehealth

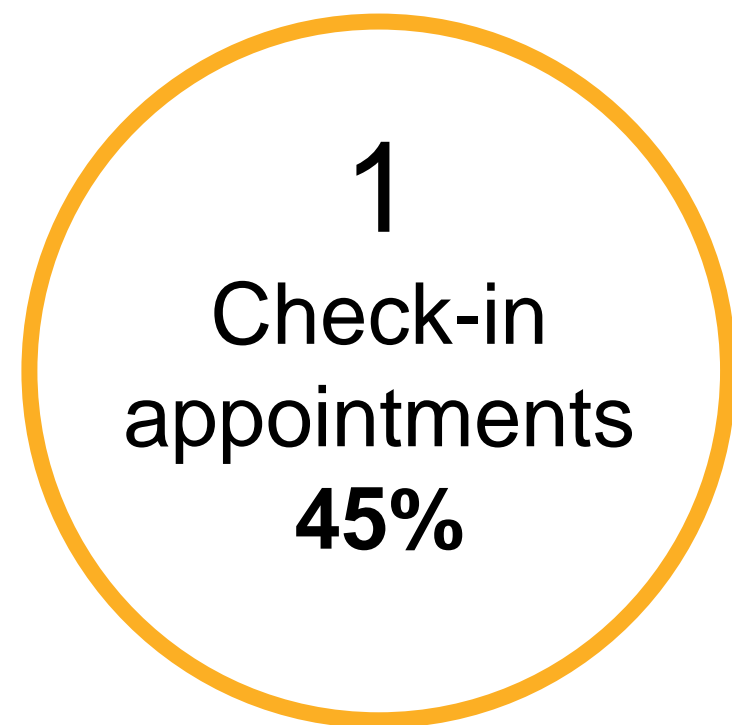




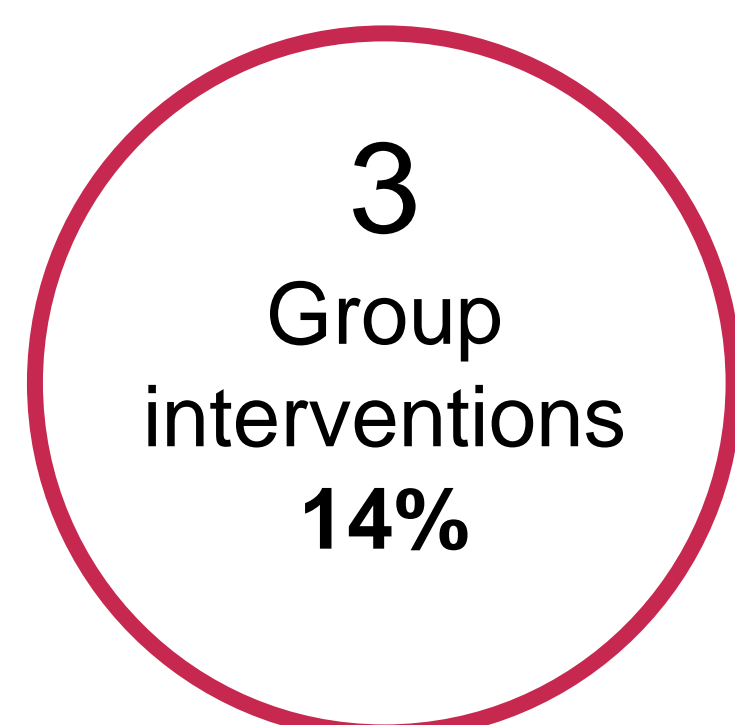
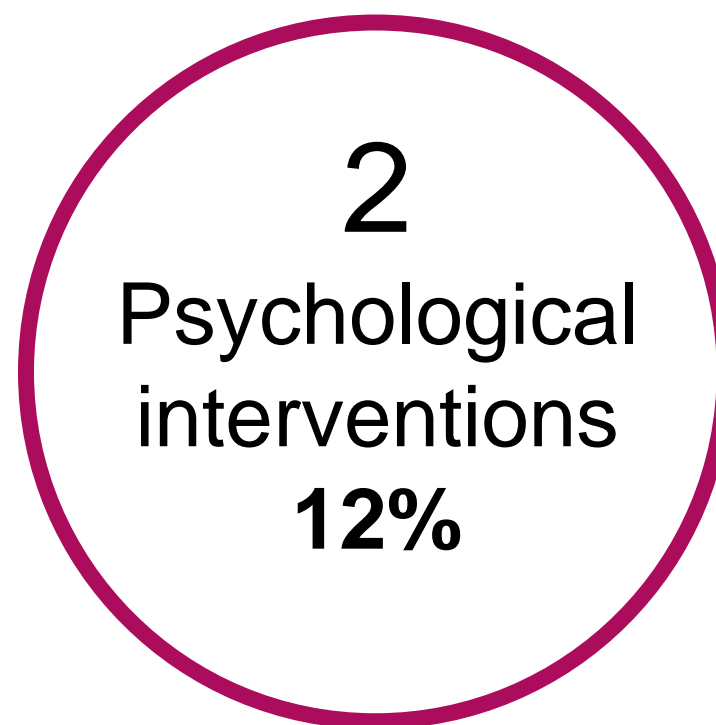
**81% of participants said
they would be willing to
use telehealth for their
child's ADHD care**



Participants said they were **most** likely to use telehealth for:



Participants said they were **least** likely to use telehealth for:



The most frequent reasons for **wanting** to use telehealth:

1
Saving time
68%

2
Improvements
to the family
routine
50%

3
Reducing
costs
46%



Examples of reasons for wanting to use telehealth:

“Being able to log in from these locations avoids me having to take annual leave that could be spent with family relaxing and my boys missing minimal school hours i.e. 30 minutes vs the travel, park, waiting, delays, over stimulated and inevitably not making it back into class”

“Overall it's a good option especially for Kerry & remote areas where we do not have the experience at the moment in the senior doctors”

“Easier to get both of us parents there at same time.”

“To get quicker access to clinicians (including psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, occupational therapists, etc.).”

“less anxiety around the social aspects of these visits for my daughter. more flexibility around where we are during the visits e.g., we can move to a different room/ sit in the car depending on how her other sibling is.”



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The most frequent reasons for not **wanting** to use telehealth:

1
Unable to receive hands-on care
56%

2
Quality of care is poorer than in-person visits
50%

3
Distraction of the child during telehealth visit
45%



Examples of reasons for not wanting to use telehealth:

"I would not be willing to access telehealth for my child with ADHD. My child finds it difficult to access screens because of his neuro divergence. The consulting doctor would get more info from a physical in person visit than a phone call too."

"Missing a personal connection, not able to ask the questions that come up more organically in a 'live' setting, very artificial"

"My child becomes very distracted and hyper on video calls, and it's difficult for the clinician to properly question/assess him because of this."

"I think a lot of non-verbal communication is lost when meetings are held via Zoom/Teams. I think a lot of nuance is lost. I think there is a convenience factor but the quality of the interaction is impaired."

"If a physical exam was needed"



Conclusions

Parents recognise deficits and benefits of telehealth, suggesting a need to build their trust and confidence in remote ADHD care.

The findings emphasise the importance of understanding and addressing the needs of children and adolescents with ADHD, and their families, for the successful use of telehealth.

Further information

The study was published in *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*.

The published study can be found at this link:
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00787-024-02466-y>

If you have any questions or comments about the study, feel free to contact Emer Galvin at emergalvin20@rcsi.ie



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