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An exploration into the lived experiences of virtual care in NSW during the COVID 19 pandemic
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study about the lived experience of virtual care during the COVID 19 pandemic in NSW.

The purpose of this project is to better understand the use of and access to telehealth and virtual care services for people in NSW during the COVID 19 pandemic. The study aims to document the experiences of those who have used, have not used and tried to use E-Health services, with particular attention to their individual lived experience. Secondly, it seeks to identify barriers to their access and use of intermediary platforms. By highlighting key and shared themes from the participants, it will make recommendations based on findings.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you have indicated you have had an experience/s with e-health services, you live in NSW and you are aged 18 years and older.

This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary.

By giving your consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

- Professor Amanda Howard – University of Sydney
- Associate Professor Margot Rawsthorne – University of Sydney
- Amy Davidson – University of Sydney

(3) What will the study involve for me?

Your participation in the study will involve taking part in either an interview or focus group with researchers. You can choose to partake in either an interview or focus group. There are no specific benefits or limitations for either, it is up to your individual choice about whether you want to discuss your experience in a group or individually. Interviews and focus groups will take approximately one hour. All interviews and focus group discussions will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. All interviews will be made anonymous after collection. No information identifiable to you will be included in research reporting. Audio recordings and transcripts will be de-identified and only researchers named on this letter will have access to the data. If you participate in an individual interview, you may receive a copy of the transcript and can provide corrections to the researchers. If you participated in a focus group, you and other group members will be able to receive a copy of the transcripts. As it is a group discussion you will not be able to alter the transcript.

You and all participants will be provided with a summary report of research results at the conclusion of the study if requested.

(4) How much of my time will the study take?

Individual interviews will be approximately forty-five minutes and focus group discussions will be approximately sixty minutes in length.

(5) Who can take part in the study?

You can take part in this study if you are aged 18 years and over, and you have indicated you have had an experience with telehealth services and you lived in NSW since the COVID 19 pandemic started.

(6) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you take part in a focus group, you are free to stop participating at any stage or to refuse to answer any of the questions. However, it will not be possible to withdraw your individual comments from our records once the group has started, as it is a group discussion.

(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study apart from your own transport costs to attend the interview or the focus group discussion.

Participants will be provided with support services contact details at interviews and focus groups. Services suggested will be Beyond Blue (1300224636 beyondblue.org.au) & Life Line (131114, lifeline.org.au)

(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

Yes, there are benefits for your participation in the study. At the moment there is only limited research available looking at people's experience with e-health services. The results from this research will be fed back directly to you and will be able to contribute to more knowledge about e-health services for the public, government, private and not for profit sector who engage e-health

services. For your participation in an interview or focus group you will receive on \$25 EFTPOS voucher.

(9) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

Interviews and focus group discussions will be audio recorded and transcribed by a professional transcription service. Only researchers named on this Statement will have access to data from the study. Members of your focus group will have access to de identified transcripts from those focus group discussions only.

Audio recordings and soft copy de identified transcripts will be stored for a period of 5 years in password protected secure files on the Chief Investigator's computer at the University of Sydney through OneDrive cloud storage. All hard copy transcripts will be de identified and stored in a locked filing cabinet in the same office for a period of 5 years. After 5-years audio recordings and transcripts will be destroyed.

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise.

Your information will be stored securely, and your identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but you will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

(10) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study, however, only people who have experienced e-health services can participate in the research.

(11) What if I would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Amanda Howard will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Amanda at amanda.howard@sydney.edu.au.

(12) Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by ticking the box on the consent form This feedback will be in the form of a summary report of the research results. Researchers will also attend a forum in your area to present and discuss research results. You will receive an email inviting you to this discussion at the conclusion of the study.

(13) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney Protocol Number 2022/495. As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

- **Telephone:** +61 2 8627 8176

- **Email:** human.ethics@sydney.edu.au
- **Fax:** +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

This information sheet is for you to keep