



User satisfaction and experience with a telemedicine service for diabetic foot disease in an Australian rural community



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By utilising currently available telemedicine networks, specialist medical advice can be accessed by rural clients at local community health centres. While providing a service over the past four years, the author has observed positive clinical outcomes and the overwhelmingly positive reactions to the service by the patients and their carers.

This qualitative research project found that prior to the telemedicine service being implemented all patients had been receiving care without significant improvement in or resolution of the clinical problem and all expressed frustration and anxiety around this. The author also found:

- Positive reactions, acceptance and relief when offered and on receipt of a telemedicine service
- The benefits of immediacy of a service, rather than being on a waiting list and not knowing when you were going to be seen
- General acceptance of the non face-to-face aspect of telemedicine
- Participants indicated they would use this type of service again

The author found there are high levels of stress associated with travel to urban areas for medical care and clients and carers benefited from the elimination or reduced need to travel as a result of the telemedicine service.

The author recommends using the current available resources to develop the present service into a Minimal Model High Risk Foot Service as per guidelines of the International Diabetes Federation. The cost effectiveness and clinical benefits of providing this service could be a subject for future study.

For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on 'view completed projects'

A tree change five years ago took Jenni to the Bega valley. A podiatrist with 18 years experience, Jenni now works at the Bega, Pambula and Eden Community Health Centres. She has a special interest in the management of the High Risk Foot. In her spare time she enjoys cooking with organic ingredients, playing with her daughter and living the 'good life' in the country.



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