

Use of virtual speech and language therapy in a low secure autism ward

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Background:

Speech and language therapy (SLT) is a fundamental treatment for patients with ASD and plays a vital role in our secure service. SLT therapists are hard to recruit across the UK and with the advent of Covid-19, innovative ways of dealing with this problem need to be established.

Method:

Virtual SLT therapy was delivered to patients through Skype over 6 weeks on our ASD ward. A questionnaire was developed to explore patient's perspective with a Likert scale and free-text comments. Nurses were asked to give feedback regarding facilitation of sessions.

Results:

Of the 15 patients on our ward, 7 were engaging in work with SLT and 5 were willing to complete the questionnaire. Results were overwhelmingly positive but it was noted that most patients did also miss face to face sessions.

Discussion:

100% of patients felt they could get their views across effectively and 100% of patients did not get annoyed or frustrated during sessions. While the virtual sessions were positively received, they did not appear to quench the need for basic face to face human interaction as most patients reported still missing their non-virtual sessions.