

Impact of Tele vs In-Person Psychological Consultations on Depression and Anxiety in Cancer Patients

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OBJECTIVE

Mental health is a critical aspect of cancer care, impacting treatment adherence, quality of life, and overall outcomes. Telehealth has emerged as a viable option for delivering psychological support, particularly for patients with limited access to in-person services. This study investigates the effectiveness of telepsychology versus in-person consultations in addressing depression and anxiety among cancer patients.

METHODS

A retrospective analysis was carried out using data from our institutional database. The sample consisted of 99 patients who had both physical and telehealth consultations. Of these patients, 32 (32.32%) were on psychiatric medication, while 67 (67.68%) were not. The gender distribution of the patients was 29.29% male and 70.71% female. The mean age of the patients was 43.91 (SD = 11.44). There was no significant difference in age between the patients in the physical consultation group and the telehealth consultation group. The data was analysed using the following statistical methods:

Mean: The mean was used to calculate the average depression and anxiety scores for each consultation type.

Independent t-test: The independent t-test was used to compare the mean depression and anxiety scores between the two consultation types and genders.

Correlation: The correlation coefficient was used to measure the relationship of age with depression and anxiety levels for each consultation type.

TABLE 1. MEAN SCORES

Metric	Physical	Teleclinic
AnxietyLevel	6.60	4.90
DepressionLevel	5.55	4.56

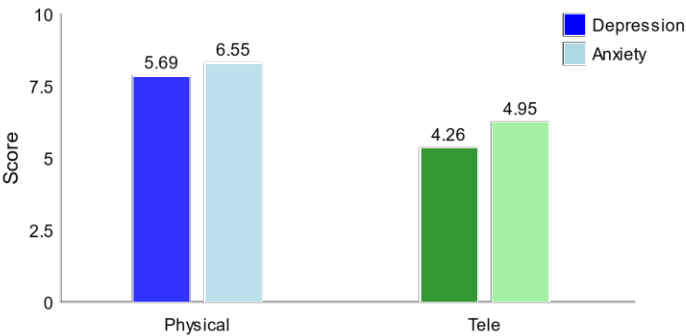
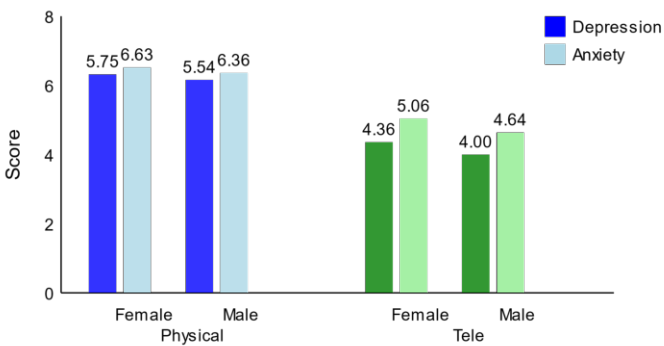


TABLE 2. AGE CORRELATION

	Physical	Teleclinic
Depression-Age Correlation	-0.0241	0.0842
Anxiety-Age Correlation	-0.1472	-0.0211

TABLE 3. MEAN SCORES BY GENDER AND CONSULTATION TYPE

Clinic	Gender	Mean Depression Score	Mean Anxiety Score
Tele	Male	4.00	4.64
	Female	4.36	5.06
Physical	Male	5.54	6.36
	Female	5.75	6.63



RESULTS

Mean Anxiety and Depression: Patients attending physical consultations showed notably higher average scores for both anxiety and depression compared to those seen in teleclinic. The differences were statistically significant at a 0.05 level.

There was a weak positive correlation between age and anxiety and depression levels for both physical and telehealth consultations. There was a slight tendency for older patients to report higher anxiety and depression. However, this relationship was quite weak, suggesting other factors play a more significant role.

Impact of Gender: There was a weak positive correlation between gender and anxiety/depression levels for both physical and telehealth consultations. Female patients, on average, reported slightly higher levels of anxiety and depression in both consultation settings. The link between gender and anxiety/depression was a bit more pronounced in the telehealth setting.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study suggest that telehealth consultations may be associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety compared to physical consultations. This finding has important implications for the delivery of mental health services, particularly in areas where access to physical consultations is limited.