Open data to understand the impact of remote consultations in primary care

#OpenDataSavesLives

Alison Dias
Improvement Analytics Unit
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Digital First Primary Care

• Digital first primary care, where patients use digital and online tools for faster and improved access to advice, support and treatment, plays a key part in the NHS long term plan

• As part of this, total triage and remote consultations are designed to improve access for patients and reduce workload pressures on GPs

• However, some GPs have urged caution and more research is required to understand the impact of different aspects of digital-first primary care on patients, the workforce and the wider health and care system
Open data sources

askmyGP provider data

• Rich source of patient-level data on triage and online GP consultations
Open data sources

GP population characteristics/demographics data

- Open data on GP characteristics including:
  - GP registered population size
  - Age, gender and ethnicity proportions
  - Index of multiple deprivation (IMD) scores
  - Quality and outcomes framework (QOF) information

- Data sourced from multiple open sources including NHSD GP practice data and ONS census data
Open data sources

- OpenPrescribing
  - A research project funded by the Health Foundation, which provides a search interface using anonymised prescribing data published by the NHS in England
  - Prescribing data available at different geographical levels, which allowed us to undertake practice-level analysis
  - Patient-level data is not available from this source
Case study

- **What we looked at**
  - Antibiotic, opioid analgesic and antidepressant prescribing patterns

- **How we linked the data**
  - GP practice code

- **Analyses**
  - Synthetic control approach
Case study

• Results

There is no evidence of any change in antibiotic prescribing patterns in early compared to late adopters of askmyGP in 2019
Rates of antibiotic prescribing per 1,000 patients per month, England, September 2016 to August 2020

Comparing early and late adopters
Comparing early adopters and synthetic control

Late adopters Early adopters National GP practices Synthetic control area

Source: askmyGP, OpenPrescribing, NHS Digital – Patients registered at a GP practice
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Case study
Case study

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a large decrease in the rate of antibiotic prescribing compared to the same period in 2019.

Year on year percentage change in the average rate of antibiotic, opioid analgesic and antidepressant prescribing in early adopters and national GP practices from March to August, England 2017 – 2020

Sources: askmyGP, OpenPrescribing, NHS Digital – Patients registered at a GP practice
Publications

- G. Clarke, P. Pariza, A. Wolters (2020): How has COVID-19 affected service delivery in GP practice that offered remote consultations before the pandemic? URL: chart

- G. Clarke, P. Pariza, A. Wolters (2020): How are total triage and remote consultation changing the use of emergency care? URL: chart

- A. Dias, G. Clarke (2020): How are total triage and remote consultation affecting prescribing patterns? URL: chart
Thank you