

**ANNUAL SUMMIT
ON DIGITAL
HEALTH AND
TELEMEDICINE 2020**

**ABORIGINAL TELEMEDICINE
EXPERIENCE DURING COVID-19**

DR HARRY RANDHAWA

HALLEE COLLARD

SHANNON BOUNDRY



Wheatbelt
**Health
Network**



ABOUT US

Super Clinic - Northam

- Large multi-D clinic - 7.6 FTE GPs: CDE, Dietetics, Podiatry, Physio, OT, Speech Therapy,
- Programs - Integrated Team Care (ITC) and Integrated Chronic Disease Care, visiting specialists (Psych, Paed, Gen Physician)
- 12000 clients of which 1047 are Aboriginal

Wheatbelt Aboriginal Health Service (WAHS) – Northam

- Not an ACCHO & operated by WACHS with input from Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- .8 FTE GP + Nurse + Patient Services Officer
- 2087 clients

Wheatbelt Aboriginal Health Service (WAHS) – Narrogin

- Located within Narrogin Hospital
- .4 FTE GP + Nurse + Project officer
- 1627 clients

MANAGING RISK

- Data from March to June 2020 comparing Aboriginal/ Non-Aboriginal uptake of Telehealth (telephone & VC) at three sites
- Covid-19 escalation during March 2020
- Clinics minimised risk to clients by offering telehealth to clients who posed risk
- Able to maintain F2F for chronic disease & complex clients who still needed F2F care
- Clients screened - High risk were masked and followed up with telehealth
- Used the following instructional video for clients to apply a face mask

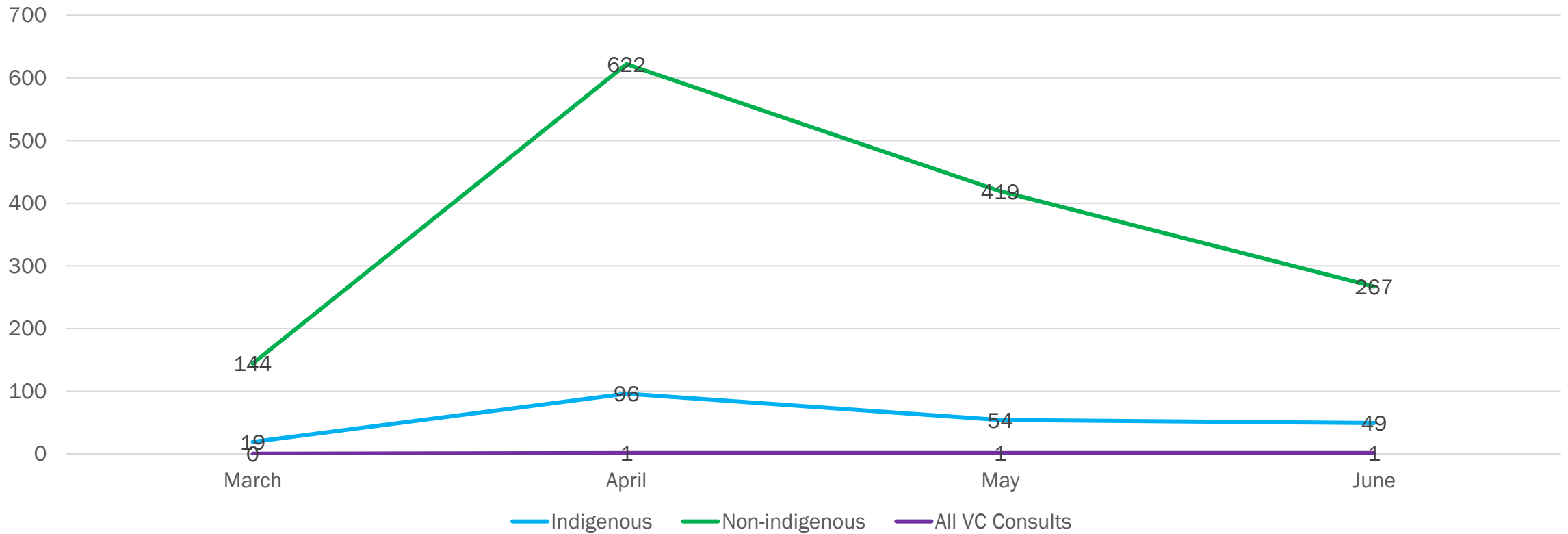


FACE MASK APPLICATION – PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION



DATA – ALL THREE SITES

Phone consults during March – June 2020



CASE STUDIES

Northam Super Clinic

26-year-old Aboriginal Male

Poorly managed Asthma phoned on the 30/03/2020 complaining of;

- Blocked nose & sore throat
- No interstate travel, afebrile & no known Covid-19 contact
- Met criteria for phone consult
- Supported with treatment via phone (antibiotics & adjustment of asthma treatment)
- Used the service 12 times over 4 months. Previous year had 11 face to face visits during same visit

WAHS - Northam

53-year-old Aboriginal male

- Presents via Taxi with Shortness of breath, dizziness + fever
- T2DM & COPD
- Identified as Covid-19 risk
- Staff followed Covid-19 protocol, used PPE & transferred PT to Northam Regional Hospital for Covid-19 testing
- Test came back NEGATIVE

WAHS – Narrogin

37-Year-old Aboriginal Male

- Obesity
- PT w T2DM
- Hypertension
- Social issues
- Anxiety
- History of drug abuse

PT experiencing panic attacks and heightened anxiety during Covid-19

No GP available (Narrogin) – 20/04/2020

PT called to book MHCP, Consult via Telehealth (Northam Clinic)

- K10 Assessment
- Referral to Psychologist
- Referral(s) to local services to support PT



FINDINGS

- VC uptake minimal with telephone usage predominating telehealth experience.
- Issues affecting uptake:
 - Access to VC cameras was limited in March.
 - Change was sudden for both practitioners and consumers with minimal time to adapt
 - Available tools were immature (Health direct, BP, Zoom) & supply issues re purchasing cameras
 - Consumers – Lack of access to smart phones, issues with data charges/ call cost which were amplified in the Aboriginal community

Consumer issues

- Verifying patient's identity,
- Patient confidentiality (consumer end – who else is in the room)
- Timing – Patients not answering phone when GP calls vice versa
- Lack of awareness about options

Practitioner issues

- Ability / confidence in operating VC hardware
- Fear of being recorded
- Fear of being watched by Organisation
- No visual cues



THANK YOU



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