



COVID-19 CLINICAL SOLUTIONS

What did you do?

We provided a service that allowed patients to text message (via WhatsApp) the practice in-house pharmacy, allowing them to remotely receive reliable information regarding their medication.

Who are you?

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What was the problem?

COVID-19 affected patient's face-to-face access to GPs. As many consultations change to telephone, taking care of vulnerable patients and ensuring they have the appropriate access has never been more important. Many patients, especially the elderly and those on poly-pharmacy, find it difficult to request repeat medications over the phone.

Some populations suffer more from lack of physical access to GP practices. These include elderly patients or those who have difficulty adapting to new pathways. Conversely, many patients worry about having to attend the practice pharmacy during the pandemic. Reducing non-essential staff exposure is also important.

What was the solution?

In our practice of 36 FTE GPs and 100 000 patients, repeat prescriptions are usually requested by visiting the GP, or attending or calling the practice pharmacy. During the pandemic our primary care organisation developed a novel solution:

Patients can now send WhatsApp messages from their registered number to the practice in-house pharmacy's dedicated line with their requests and medication queries. The phone is held by pharmacists daily and securely kept in the pharmacy, never leaving the site.

This service proved very popular with patients, and perhaps surprisingly so with elderly patients and those on polypharmacy who were able to send pictures of medication boxes or tablets. We also found those without access to a smartphone or WhatsApp invariably had a relative or carer who did.

Visual aids are important to many patients, as is written advice they can keep. As any advice remained in written form, the patient or carer could refer back to it if required.

Along with home delivery of medications, patients in Qatar's public primary care setting have had minimal disruption to their repeat prescriptions; in fact, services have enhanced and remote access has expanded. We hope to further build on this success to the benefit of our patients post-COVID-19.

Where can we find out more?

Please contact us via email. Our email addresses are:

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<https://bigp.org>