

# Exploring the Attitude of Patients with HIV About Using Telehealth for HIV Care

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## Abstract

Telehealth could address many of the factors identified as barriers for retention in HIV care. In this study, we explore people with HIV (PWH)'s attitudes about using telemedicine for HIV care instead of face-to-face clinic visits. We administered a one-time survey to PWH presenting to an outpatient HIV center in Houston, Texas, from February to June 2018. The survey items were used to assess PWH's attitudes toward and concerns for telehealth and explanatory variables; 371 participants completed the survey; median age was 51, 36% were female, and 63% was African American. Overall 57% of respondents were more likely to use telehealth for their HIV care if available, as compared with one-on-one in-person care, and 37% would use telehealth frequently or always as an alternative to clinic visits. Participants reported many benefits, including ability to fit better their schedule, decreasing travel time, and privacy but expressed concerns about the ability to effective communication and examination and the safety of personal information. Factors associated with likelihood of using telehealth include personal factors (US-born, men who have sex with men, higher educational attainment, higher HIV-related stigma perception), HIV-related factors (long-standing HIV), and structural factors (having difficulty attending clinic visits, not knowing about or not having the necessary technology). There was no association between participants with uncontrolled HIV, medication adherence, and likelihood of using telehealth. Telehealth programs for PWH can improve retention in care. Availability and confidence using various telehealth technologies need to be addressed to increase acceptability and usage of telehealth among PWH.