

## Background

### Why do this research?

- Development of interpersonal skills 'in-person' is a core part of training our optometrists for effective patient-centred care
- Telehealth is becoming increasingly used to provide accessible eyecare to patients
- Feedback opportunities about students' interpersonal skills during tele-consulting are currently limited

### Aims of the study

- Assess feasibility and utility of providing feedback to students from both patients and clinicians, following a mock tele-consult
- Determine agreement in student ratings (using a validated tool to assess interpersonal skills) between patients and clinicians

## Behaviour change

"Since receiving feedback from patients I have altered my interactions in the following ways..."

"I have tried to look out for cues if patients are worried/nervous and try to politely ask if patients need more information or reassurance since it has been pointed out to me that I may have overlooked that aspect of communication."

"I have been more proactive about explaining ocular conditions in layman's terms and actively thinking about the words I use in my explanations."

"I have become more careful about making sure my management is clear and concise... [and] have started writing more of my management plan down for the patient's convenience."

"I have been working on the flow of my history taking so it doesn't feel like a script and is more fluent."

"The feedback I received instilled confidence in my interactions with patients and I found I went into consults with less hesitation."

"I have been less abrupt in some of my questioning for patients."

I think it's difficult to maintain eye contact over Zoom but in my experiences in clinic following this interaction I have been actively trying to make more eye contact."

## Methods



### PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

- Final year Doctor of Optometry students opted in to participate (n=19)
- Volunteer patients aged 50+ recruited from the general public, University of Melbourne and U3A
- Teaching clinicians, with experience supervising student consultations, recruited from professional networks



### TELE-CONSULTATION SESSION

- Zoom videoconference call (~45 mins) hosted by a single investigator (BNN) who facilitated the student-patient interactions
- Volunteer patient renamed
- Teaching clinician de-identified and muted for anonymity

### TASK 1: TAKE A HISTORY

- Student optometrists introduced themselves and took a history (~15 mins), assuming first-time presentation to the clinic



### TASK 2: DISCUSS MANAGEMENT

- Student optometrists discussed a fictional scenario with the patient, including an explanation of the diagnosis, test results, review and management plan (~15 mins)
- Patients encouraged to ask questions or seek further clarification



### EVALUATION OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- After each session, volunteer patients and teaching clinicians completed the Doctor's Interpersonal Skills Questionnaire to rate performance
- Open-text feedback also sought ("What two things did the student do well/ could the student improve?")

### SURVEY ABOUT PILOT PROGRAM

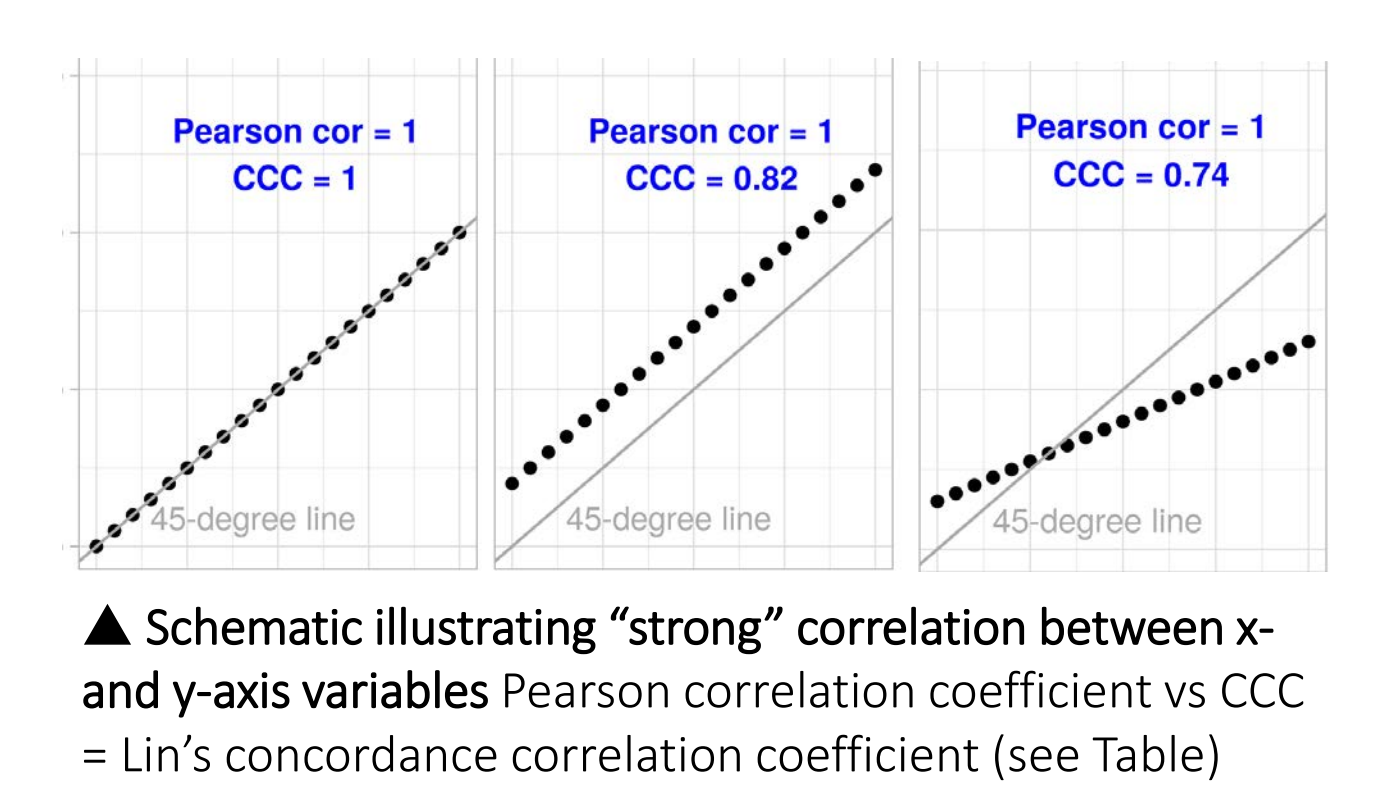
- Volunteer patients, teaching clinicians, and students invited to evaluate the teaching and learning initiative via an anonymous survey



## Clinical relevance

- Patients and clinicians are willing and capable of providing feedback to student optometrists about their interpersonal skills during telehealth consults
- Patients and clinicians can provide useful insight and feedback to optometry students about their interpersonal skills, from different perspectives
- Providing feedback about interpersonal skills leads to behaviour change
- Providing feedback may better prepare future optometrists for successful telehealth consulting, improving optometric care and patient satisfaction

▼ **Doctors' Interpersonal Skills Questionnaire** (modified for optometrists as per Schmid et al *Clin Exp Optom* 2020; 103: 361-367) domain ratings (max 5 stars each) of student performance (n=19) by volunteer patients and teaching clinicians (median, range), and agreement between ratings (concordance of 1.0 = perfect match along 45-degree line)



	Volunteer patients	Teaching clinicians	Lin's concordance coefficient
Concern for patient as a person	5 (3 – 5)	5 (2 – 5)	0.45
Respect shown to patient	5 (3 – 5)	5 (4 – 5)	0.44
Recommendation to friends about the student	4 (3 – 5)	4 (3 – 5)	0.41
Confidence in student's ability	4 (2 – 5)	4 (3 – 5)	0.33
Explanations of things	4 (2 – 5)	4 (1 – 5)	0.30
Opportunity to express concerns or fears	5 (2 – 5)	4 (2 – 5)	0.28
Warmth of greeting	4 (3 – 5)	5 (3 – 5)	0.25
Ability to really listen	4 (2 – 5)	5 (3 – 5)	0.22
Time given to patient	5 (2 – 5)	4 (3 – 5)	0.22
Overall satisfaction	4 (3 – 5)	4 (3 – 5)	0.18
Patient felt reassured	4 (3 – 5)	4 (1 – 5)	0.17
Consideration of personal situation	5 (2 – 5)	4 (1 – 5)	0.15
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>54 (30 – 60)</b>	<b>52 (32 – 59)</b>	<b>0.39</b>

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