

# Rural rheumatology telemedicine services satisfy patients

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(HealthDay)—Patient satisfaction is high with a rural rheumatology telemedicine service, according to a study published online Dec. 20 in the *International Journal of Rheumatic Diseases*.

Katherine A. Poulsen, from The Townsville Hospital in Australia, and colleagues examined [patient satisfaction](#) with the [rheumatology](#) telemedicine service provided in a rural town in Southern Australia. Data were collected from 107 rheumatology outpatients (49 seen at local telemedicine clinics, 46 travelled to be seen face-to-face, and 12 seen at an infrequent local face-to-face clinic).

The researchers found that satisfaction with themes relating to quality-of-care was high; more than 90 percent of [patients](#) agreed or strongly

agreed with these questions. There were no significant differences noted in the rates of those selecting "strongly agree" across questions comparing models of care, except for one question relating to rapport, in which the local face-to-face model was favored ( $P = 0.018$ ). Sixty-three percent of patients disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would rather travel for a face-to-face appointment than participate in a telemedicine consultation.

"These results suggest that patients are satisfied with a rheumatology telemedicine service, and may prefer this to extensive travelling," the authors write. "Evaluation in other settings is recommended before generalizing this finding."

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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