

Medical emergency trial shows value of live video streaming

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Using live video streaming from the scene of accidents and medical emergencies to the dispatch team of a Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) has public support and the potential to be rolled out across the UK's ambulance network , according to the team behind a scientific study.

A trial undertaken by Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex and South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust evaluated the use of GoodSAM—one of the world's most advanced emergency alerting and dispatching platforms—when assessing casualties at incident scenes.

During the pilot study, [video footage](#) was received directly from 19 [emergency calls](#), with all of the public making the calls agreeing to live stream via their smartphone to help the people involved in the real-time incident.

The study suggests the use of the [video](#) streaming also reduces the stress of the person reporting the accident, with video replacing the need for them to make any medical judgements over the scale of the person's injuries, consciousness or state of breathing.

The GoodSAM Instant-on-scene function provides HEMS dispatchers with the ability to request people calling the emergency services activate their smartphone video camera and securely stream live footage from the incident direct to the control room.

No App is required, only a video-capable mobile phone. Dispatchers secured permission via a text message and ensured the caller was safe to approach the scene.

The technology makes it possible for dispatchers to make an instant-on-scene video connection with the person who has made the emergency call in order to accurately assess the scale of the incident and direct the most appropriate emergency vehicle, in this study an air ambulance.

Prof Richard Lyon, Associate Medical Director at Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex and Professor at the School of Health Science, University of Surrey, said: "HEMS teams attend the most severely-injured trauma patients, and time is critical to saving life and preventing long-term disability.

"It is essential our dispatch teams are able to dispatch the air ambulance accurately to those who might benefit the most from HEMS interventions, and smartphones have the potential to make a [positive impact](#).

"HEMS resources are limited, and careful screening of patients who might benefit from HEMS interventions is important, so dispatching the right service, to the right incident, at the right time is crucial for everybody concerned.

"More research is still required to evaluate the critical impact of the video streaming in terms of improving speed and accuracy but our initial findings, based on real-life missions, indicate the technology is very helpful. The results also suggest the public are willing to participate and there is potential for the platform to be used across UK [ambulance services](#)."

The study paper recognises the potential impact on the dispatchers who

have until now dealt only with phone calls but in the future might be faced with seeing real-time images from serious incidents.

Prof Lyon added: "The issue of support for all our staff, and also the public is one we are very aware of as the project moves forward."

Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex operates 24/7 and delivers more than 2,500 missions a year serving the area's 4.7m population and the people travelling through the area.

Dr. Helen Bowcock, Chair of Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex, added: "Research is an integral part of the charity's commitment to improving performance and patient outcomes. This collaboration with SECAMB and University of Surrey will help roll out exciting new technologies that will improve the speed and accuracy of dispatch by HEMS and Ambulance Trusts."

Prof Mark Wilson, Professor of Brain Injury at Imperial College and Medical Director of GoodSAM, said: "We gain so much information instantly using our eyes. We can evaluate both the scene (e.g. how many vehicles in a crash) and how sick a patient looks, all of which takes time to verbalise and is often difficult for bystanders to describe.

"We believe the use of video is a step change in out-of-hospital care—not just for trauma but for a plethora of conditions from stroke to mental health. The GoodSAM video system enables patients to get faster, more appropriate care, and clinicians to be able to provide clear advice, facilitating us to provide care before we even get there."

More information: E. ter Avest et al, Live video footage from scene to aid helicopter emergency medical service dispatch: a feasibility study, *Scandinavian Journal of Trauma, Resuscitation and Emergency Medicine* (2019). [DOI: 10.1186/s13049-019-0632-4](https://doi.org/10.1186/s13049-019-0632-4)

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