

Teleconsultation to prevent skin conditions in infants

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A recent publication in *JMIR Pediatrics and Parenting* reported that mothers of infants are prone to experiencing parenting stress, which adversely affects mothers' and children's well-being. Additionally,

studies have reported that atopic dermatitis (AD) among offspring enhances parenting stress, and postnatal maternal psychological problems can increase the risk of AD in children.

Eligible pairs of infants and mothers were randomly assigned to the [intervention group](#) or the [control group](#).

In addition, participants in the intervention group had the option to combine routine pediatric services with teleconsultation and email newsletters without charge from the date of registration until the infant turned 4 months.

Primary outcomes were the prevalence of AD in infants diagnosed based on the United Kingdom Working Party criteria and parenting stress and mental status of mothers assessed using the Parenting Stress Index-Short Form and General Health Questionnaire-12.

There was a significant difference in the prevalence of AD between participants who used teleconsultation services and email newsletters, participants who did not use teleconsultation services but received email newsletters, and participants who neither received nor used either service.

Dr. Akira Oka from The University of Tokyo says that "the exchange of valid health-related information between [health care professionals](#) and their patients can facilitate successful diagnosis, treatment, and prevention as well as research and evaluation, thereby advancing the health of individuals and communities."

Telemedicine and eHealth are widely used services due to their functionality, ease of use, cost-effectiveness, time-saving features, and accessibility for patients who live far from [health care facilities](#).

Telemedicine and eHealth intervention services provided to pediatric patients with conditions such as autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and [chronic diseases](#) have been demonstrated to positively influence [pediatric patients](#) as well as families and health care providers.

Moreover, parents have reported experiencing actual and perceived benefits of eHealth services, including ease of use, higher confidence in and satisfaction with infant care, and efficient knowledge transmission.

In Japan, a few reports have described the use of perinatal eHealth services provided by [health care providers](#), such as telediagnosis for fetal cardiac diseases, construction of electronic medical records for perinatal care, and digitalization of a maternal and child health handbook.

Compared with the control group receiving routine postnatal care via local government services, these authors hypothesized that the additional service comprising teleconsultation and email newsletters provided by pediatricians would be an [effective strategy](#) for preventing AD in infants and reducing parenting stress in mothers at 4 months post partum.

Dr. Oka and the research team concluded that although a combined pediatric service with teleconsultation and email newsletters was not effective in reducing parenting stress in mothers, this is the first randomized controlled trial to demonstrate that telehealth was effective in reducing the prevalence of AD in infants.

Such educational programs are a necessary complement to clinical and public services attempting to improve skin conditions in infants.

The authors hope that pediatric eHealth will become a new widely used strategy for preventing AD, which may also lead to a reduction in other allergic diseases.

More information: Tomohisa Ando et al, Effectiveness of Pediatric Teleconsultation to Prevent Skin Conditions in Infants and Reduce Parenting Stress in Mothers: Randomized Controlled Trial, *JMIR Pediatrics and Parenting* (2021). [DOI: 10.2196/27615](https://doi.org/10.2196/27615)

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