

Even during height of pandemic, most did not use prenatal telehealth

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Many pregnant individuals who gave birth between June and December

2020 did not use prenatal telehealth, according to a research letter published online Oct. 10 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Rebecca A. Gourevitch, Ph.D., from the University of Maryland in College Park, and colleagues used results from a multistate survey to examine variation in prenatal telehealth use and reasons for its nonuse at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis included responses from 12,073 participants in the 2020 Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System who gave birth between June and December 2020.

The researchers found that one in three respondents used prenatal telehealth. Use was similar for respondents with [private insurance](#) and Medicaid, but uninsured respondents were 14.6 percentage points less likely to use prenatal telehealth. Compared with non-Hispanic White respondents, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, and Indigenous respondents were more likely to use prenatal telehealth, while participants in [rural areas](#) were less likely to use it than urban respondents.

Among the 7,686 respondents who did not use prenatal telehealth, [personal preference](#) for in-person care (70 percent) was the most reported reason, followed by no appointment availability (26 percent), other reasons (14 percent), and technological barriers (5 percent).

"Our results by insurance type and race and ethnicity are more consistent with national surveys across conditions than with single-site studies of prenatal telehealth, highlighting the importance of multisite research to inform best practices," the authors write.

More information: Rebecca A. Gourevitch et al, Use of Prenatal Telehealth in the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.37978](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.37978)

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