

Health technology assessment of teledermatology to support the management of primary care referrals

What did we assess?

We examined the clinical effectiveness, safety and cost impacts of using teledermatology for adults and children referred by a GP to a consultant dermatologist.



What is teledermatology?

For this assessment, teledermatology is when a dermatologist uses photos or live videoconferencing along with a referral letter to triage and prioritise patients for outpatient appointments.

Where it is safe to do so, the dermatologist may not need to see the patient in person.

Why is demand increasing?



Ireland's population is increasing and getting older, skin cancer rates are rising, and there are new treatments and technologies available to help manage skin conditions.

How could teledermatology help?

The current waiting lists to see a consultant dermatologist are very long.

Teledermatology could help dermatologists to manage more patients within their current capacity.



What did we find?

Teledermatology is safe and effective when it is used as part of a complete clinical pathway.

Over 60,000 patients are waiting for a dermatology appointment. Teledermatology could help an additional 270,000 patients be managed over a 10-year period.

Even with teledermatology significant recruitment of additional consultant dermatologists is required.