

5 minutes with... a Gynaecologist

Dr Shahnaz Akbar is a consultant in Consultant Obstetrics, Gynaecology & Reproductive Medicine & Surgery for Luton and Dunstable University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. Primary care clinicians can use telephone or photo messaging to obtain Gynaecology Advice & Guidance via the Consultant Connect App. The service was launched in May 2020.

Dr Akbar talks to us about her personal experience of answering A&G calls through the service...

1 What were the reservations (by you or your team) of using Consultant Connect prior to the service being rolled out?

"They thought; it might be time consuming, may not be safe as they would not have seen the patient/there would be a lack of information."

2 Have you found it easy to use?

"Certainly, It is very helpful to patients, GPs and us as secondary provider consultants. And in a very short time, patients get timely advice / treatments and avoid unnecessary hospital visits. It is not time consuming (for us) and it's very easy to use and is educational to the GPs as well."

3 How has it helped your department?

"Reduced referrals, timely advice and treatment to patients. Freed up appointments can be used to prioritise other patients – it helps enable the best use of clinic slots."

4 Have you found your team's workload has been impacted by reviewing cases?

"Team's workload reduced as appointments were reduced. Giving advice was not time consuming."

5 How has it helped with your response to COVID-19? What changes have you needed to make?

"It was extremely helpful; GPs can also send photos of the conditions, hence reduced exposure to hospital environment and as per COVID-19 guidelines.

If a patient needs to be seen for some specific conditions photo messaging was used."

6 What do you see as the main benefits to patients?

"Reduced stress, timely advice /treatment, unnecessary visits to hospital, they do not need to take time off from work, they avoid having to make childcare arrangements in order to visit hospital, and avoid to car parking fees. Overall happy and content patients with the timely advice /treatments from the consultants."

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