# **Online Consultations Query - Open Safely (OS)**

## **Description**

There is an ongoing NHSE/I evaluation of 'Digital First Primary Care: Evaluation of a digital first approach in response to Covid-19', with key objectives:

* To understand the circumstances and models in which total triage and remote consultations work and don’t work, for whom and why
* To understand what changes are required to optimise the benefits and mitigate risks for patients and general practices from these new ways of working
* To inform changes required at a national, regional and local level going forwards

Initial ask was to scope how OpenSafely could support analysis of primary care provider clinical data for general practices utilising four online consultation systems in England. An initial brief was shared with key research questions.

There are however several challenges\* in the definition, coding and querying of (online) consultations. It was therefore suggested that, as a first step, the coding prevalence (incl variation and trends) of individual codes of interest should be studied, in line with the OpenSafely NHS Service Restoration Observatory project. [1]

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## **Relation to COVID-19 and the COPI notice**

The analysis of usage and the impact of online consultation solutions by GP practices before covid and during covid-19 pandemic would facilitate the identification of trends and variation in primary care clinical activity during the covid period. It would also help identify trends in the demographic profile of users and the levels of utilisation of online consultations across different areas. We aim to triangulate this data with OC supplier data and qualitative findings as part of a wider research piece.

## **Proposed plan**

Initial discussions highlighted what might be feasible to explore in OpenSafely - and limitations\*.

The suggestion for reformulation was to start by looking at the prevalence of certain codes of interest and potentially form part of the NHS Service Restoration Observatory work.

* **Codes** (tbc)

Codes of interest have been identified through a) definition of keywords, which were then searched in relevant databases (SNOMED CT Browser, the NHSD Kahootz CTV3 lookup, Oxford Biobank) and chosen judgementally ; b) pragmatic search of the literature; c) circulation of list by DFPC team, in order to sift codes and supplement with missing ones. Often codes identified were SNOMED – equivalent codes for CTV3 were searched for where in existence – though often this proved unsuccessful.

[Git Issue](https://github.com/opensafely/codelist-development/issues/48) ; [Draft codelist (CTV3)](https://codelists.opensafely.org/codelist/user/martinaf/online-consultations-ctv3-and-local-v01/2dcbed5c/); [Draft codelist (SNOMED)](https://codelists.opensafely.org/codelist/user/martinaf/online-consultations-snomed-v01/7bad06f1/)

Provisional list for code-by-code exploration:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **type** | **CTV3Code** | **nm** | **note** |
| local-tpp | Y1f3b | eConsultation via online application (procedure) | Local TPP code |
| ctv3 | XUkjp | Telemedicine consultation with patient (procedure) | SnomedCTbrowser refset |
| ctv3 | XaXcK | Telemedicine consultation with patient | CTV3 snomed lkp |
| ctv3 | XVCTw | Telemedicine consultation with provider (procedure) | SnomedCTbrowser refset |
| ctv3 | XUuWQ | Remote non-verbal consultation (procedure) | SnomedCTbrowser refset |
| ctv3 | XV1pT | Telepractice consultation (procedure) | SnomedCTbrowser refset |
| ctv3 | 9N34. | Encounter by computer link | CTV3 snomed lkp |
| ctv3 | .9N34 | Encounter by computer link | CTV3 snomed lkp |
| ctv3 | XUman | Alert received from telehealth monitoring system | SnomedCTbrowser refset |
| ctv3 | XaX2B | Alert received from telehealth monitoring system CTV3 snomed lkp | |
| ctv3 | 9G6.. | Alert received from telehealth monitoring system CTV3 snomed lkp | |
| local-tpp | Y22b4 | Remote consultation | Local TPP code |

* **Analysis** - outputting:
  + The number of instances of each code [in the last 24 months] and number of unique patients with those codes
  + Number and portion of practices having used those codes at least once
  + Monthly time-series [last 24 months] of code instances (+ GP consultations as trend comparator)
  + Time-trend charts showing median and deciles of practices
  + *Potentially expand further to bring in line with NHS Service Restoration Observatory (e.g. IDR display; classification of service restoration; overall eligibility and study definition alignment)*
  + *[Exclude for now?]* Sociodemographics for cohorts: entire population; population that has had a GP appointment; population that has had an OC instance
* Current git location (private): https://github.com/mbfons/OS\_OC\_v001-research

**\* Challenges / limitations on initial ask**

* Coding lexicon for online consultations;
* Variability of types of codes used by systems / templates / practices – and uptake;
* Physical meaning of an OC instance (e.g. some journeys may generate various codes so do not tally an online consultation as unit; some OC instances would be admin only so would not count as consultation-proper)

# References

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| [1] | The OpenSAFELY Collaborative, “OpenSAFELY NHS Service Restoration Observatory 1: describing trends and variation in primary care clinical activity for 23.3 million patients in England during the first wave of COVID-19.,” *medRxiv preprint,* 2021. |