

# Caring Virtually

My name is Majd Ghadban, and I am co-leading a study with my colleague Julia Stoneman, to understand cancer patient experiences with using virtual care as a method of healthcare delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study is being undertaken by a network of national oncology patient organizations in Canada known as CONECTed: Collective Oncology Network for Exchange, Cancer care innovation, Treatment access and Education.

More information about CONECTed can be found on its website: <https://conected.io/>

## **What is Virtual Care?**

For the purposes of this study, virtual care is defined broadly as any healthcare interaction with a healthcare professional, including doctors, nurses and therapists, through the use of electronic communication tools.

Virtual care allows you to connect to a healthcare provider other than by face-to-face or in-office appointments, such as a video call, telehealth, phone call, email, or text messaging.

## **Study Purpose**

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of virtual care increased dramatically to provide a safe alternative for patients to receive healthcare services. This includes medical appointments for a wide range of medical needs.

The need for a rapid roll out of virtual care in a state of emergency has not permitted planning and implementation with meaningful public and patient input into aspects of the design and implementation, including the definition of scope, applicability in specific populations, geography, particular diseases, or types of medical interactions. Specifically, in the oncology realm, this rapid rollout has not permitted an opportunity to analyze the implications of virtual care on treatment for people living with cancer. It remains unclear whether, and if so, under what circumstances, a virtual care approach is a good fit for managing and treating cancers.

The purpose of this study is to understand cancer patient experiences using virtual care during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to develop recommendations that will help to ensure adoption and adaptation of equitable, equal, consistent, and comprehensive virtual care best practices across Canada.

To achieve the objectives of this project, we will conduct one-on-one interviews with cancer patients who needed to use virtual care during the COVID-19 pandemic as part of their cancer care.

These interviews are offered in both English and French.

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This study also includes a parallel, Indigenous Stream, which will engage with Indigenous communities to better understand their experiences.

Study findings will be used to develop reports, which will be made public. The findings will also be used to inform future studies in the area of virtual care and oncology.

## Study Team

In addition to myself and my colleague Julia Stoneman, the study team includes Jessica Finucane, Ed.S., Dr. Ambreen Sayani, Postdoctoral Fellow – CIHR Patient-Oriented Research, Leadership Stream at the Women's College Research Institute, Women's College Hospital, Louise Binder, Health Policy Consultant, Save Your Skin Foundation and member of CONECTed's Steering Committee, and Dr. Tim Ramsay, Scientific Director, Ottawa Methods Centre.

## Are you interested in participating in the study?

We are looking for interested individuals to participate in a one-on-one, phone-based, semi-structured interview about their experience with using virtual care as part of their cancer care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The phone-based interview will be about 30 minutes - 1 hour long and will include some demographic questions as well as questions about your experience with using virtual care.

An honorarium of \$100 will be provided to interview participants in recognition of their contribution to the study.

Your name and other identifying information will not be included in the study data. The interview data will be completely deidentified to protect your privacy and confidentiality. The phone interview will be recorded and then transcribed for data analysis by the researchers, however, rest assured that your name and identifying information about you will not be on the recording and will not appear in the transcript. Additionally, recordings are deleted immediately after they are transcribed, and all transcripts are stored on a secure server that only the study team can access.

If you are over the age of 18, living in Canada, and you have been diagnosed with cancer, and you are interested in participating in this study, please complete a short intake questionnaire and a member of the study team will be in touch with you to schedule your interview. Please note that only participants selected for an interview will be contacted.

**You can access the intake questionnaire online here at this link:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/caringvirtually>

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## **Alternative options for accessing the intake questionnaire**

You can also click on this link to download a printable version of the intake questionnaire: ([intake.caringvirtually.com](https://intake.caringvirtually.com)). You can fill it out and email it to ([CaringVirtually@protonmail.com](mailto:CaringVirtually@protonmail.com)).

Alternatively, you can call the number below during operating hours, and you can talk to a researcher about scheduling an interview. You can also text this number if you choose.

+1 647-948-9708

1-877-842-0637 (Toll-free)

## **Informed Consent Form**

When your interview is scheduled, you will be asked to sign and send an Informed Consent Form prior to the interview. The form will be sent to you by the researchers when scheduling your interview.

## **Right to Withdraw Consent**

Participation in the study is strictly voluntary. While completing the interview, you may decline to answer any question. You can also end the interview at any point.

You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time.

Should you have any questions about the study or the interview process, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Email: [CaringVirtually@protonmail.com](mailto:CaringVirtually@protonmail.com)

Phone: +1 647-948-9708

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