University College London Hospitals
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From Reactive to Proactive: Reinventing post-fitting support by introducing a proactive 4-week telephone follow-up post hearing aid fitting

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Background

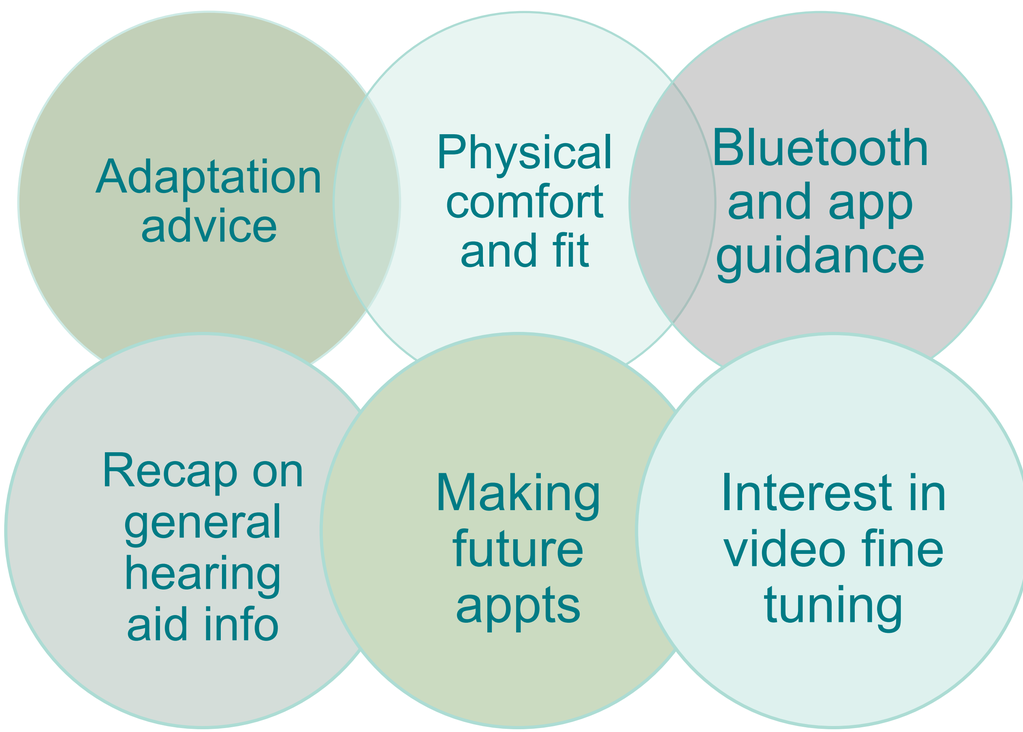
Following hearing aid fitting, some new and existing hearing aid users may experience difficulties that affect hearing aid use, confidence, and satisfaction. This quality improvement project evaluated the feasibility and potential benefits of introducing a proactive telephone follow-up four weeks after fitting to identify and address issues early and reduce the follow-up waiting list of the service.

Method

Thirty-nine adults who had recently been fitted with hearing aids were contacted by telephone approximately 4 weeks after their appointment. During the call, key information provided at the fitting was reinforced, questions were addressed, and patients were offered further support where required, including additional counselling or a face-to-face follow-up appointment. Three Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles were conducted to identify and address issues arising during the planning phase. Lessons learned from each cycle informed improvements in subsequent cycles until full clinic implementation was considered feasible.

A calculation was also done to identify the financial, social, and environmental impact of the telephone follow-ups.

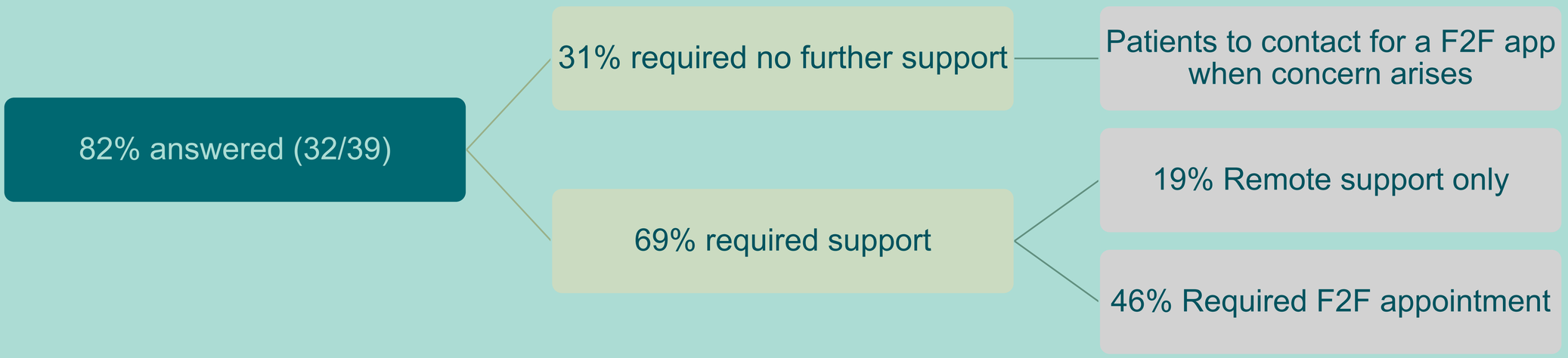
Main issues identified

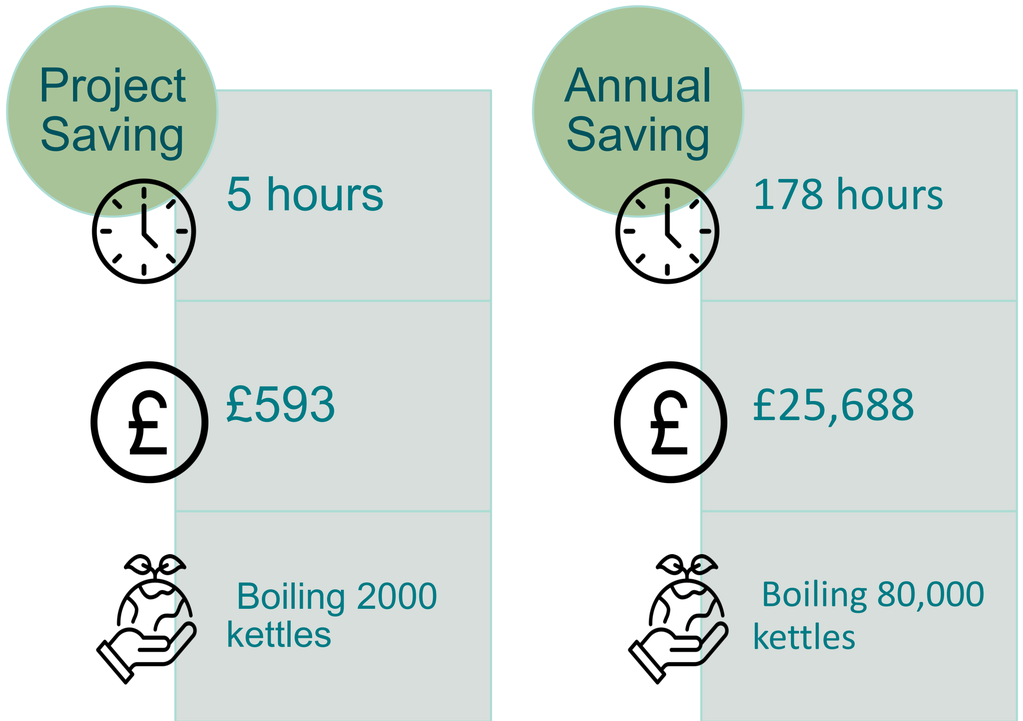


Results

Thirty-two patients (82%) answered the telephone call. Of these, 10 (31%) reported no concerns and required no further assistance. The remaining 22 patients (69%) required some form of support. 16 patients (46%) required a face-to-face follow-up appointment.

The project generated 5 clinical hours of capacity, prevented 32 unnecessary hospital visits for the patients, and avoided 154 patient travel miles, contributing to improved service efficiency and reduced environmental impact.





Conclusion and Implication

Nearly 70% of patients required additional support within the first month after hearing aid fitting. Proactive 4-week telephone follow-ups enabled timely intervention, improved service efficiency, reduced patient travel, and saved an estimated 38.2 kg CO_2e during the project (1.36 tonnes annually). These findings support their incorporation into routine adult hearing aid care.

Next Steps

- Implement a 4-week post-fitting telephone follow-up clinic
- Collect patient feedback using questionnaires
- Gather staff feedback through structured surveys
- Review outcomes 6 months post-implementation and identify any required service improvements
- Monitor appointment utilisation and DNA rates
- Assess impact on face-to-face clinic demand and waiting times