



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Telemedicine services through “Telekyanmar online clinics” following the military coup in Myanmar: Clients’ and providers’ satisfaction

[version 1; peer review: 1 approved with reservations]

MM Mon , Laxus Tun, HM Soe , PP Kyaw, Kyaw Soe Thant , Yibo Kyaw, Htet Myat Myint

Ministry of Health, NUG, Myanmar, Myanmar

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## Abstract

### Background

Telekyanmar (Telehealth), one of the telemedicine services in Myanmar, was initiated a few months after the military coup and amidst the onset of the third wave of COVID-19 pandemic. The program aims to address the urgent requirement for accessible medical services for Myanmar’s vulnerable population. Given the critical importance of both clients’ and providers’ satisfaction in the success of telemedicine services, this study aims to evaluate clients’ and providers’ satisfaction regarding the telehealth services offered by the Telekyanmar project in Myanmar.

### Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted from February 2023 to September 2023 by utilizing a quantitative research method. Data were collected online through a structured questionnaire. The clients who have received health care services and clinicians who are working at Telekyanmar clinics during the study period were included in the study. Data management and analysis were done by using R software (<https://www.r-project.org/>).

### Results

A total of 306 clients and 79 clinicians were included in the assessment. The mean age of the clients and clinicians were 33.2±13.6

## Open Peer Review

### Approval Status ?

1

#### version 1

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?

[view](#)

1. **Victor Patterson** , University of Khartoum, Khartoum, Sudan

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years and 35.6±6.8 years, respectively. Over 85% of the clients and 58.2% of clinicians were residing inside the country. Clients' satisfaction on various aspects of Telekyanmar services were assessed, with the question regarding "health staff respect for privacy" receiving the highest proportion of "good" and "excellent" responses at 96.1%. Regarding overall treatment experience, 96.7% of clients reported being "very satisfied" and "satisfied" with the Telekyanmar services. Overall satisfaction was reported by 88.6% of clinicians. Specifically, over 87% of clinicians reported their satisfaction on "communication with patients", 79.7% satisfied with "quality of clinical consultation", and 78.5% satisfied with "treatment prescription".

## Conclusions

The findings indicated that majority of the clients and clinicians expressed their satisfaction with the Telekyanmar services, which was established to address the healthcare needs of people in Myanmar after the military coup.

## Keywords

Telemedicine, Clients' satisfaction, Clinicians' satisfaction, Myanmar, Military coup



This article is included in the [Health Services gateway](#).

**Corresponding author:** MM Mon ([mmyomon@gmail.com](mailto:mmyomon@gmail.com))

**Author roles:** **Mon M:** Conceptualization, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Writing – Review & Editing; **Tun L:** Conceptualization, Data Curation, Funding Acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project Administration, Supervision, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Writing – Review & Editing; **Soe H:** Conceptualization, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Writing – Review & Editing; **Kyaw P:** Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – Review & Editing; **Thant KS:** Conceptualization, Funding Acquisition, Investigation, Project Administration, Resources, Supervision, Writing – Review & Editing; **Kyaw Y:** Investigation, Project Administration, Resources, Writing – Review & Editing; **Myint HM:** Data Curation, Investigation, Project Administration, Supervision

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## Introduction

Telemedicine, also known as telehealth, refers to the provision of healthcare services remotely by healthcare professionals utilizing information and communication technologies to facilitate data exchange. Its goal is to enhance access to healthcare for populations in geographically underserved areas. Telehealth encompasses various healthcare services such as diagnosis, treatment, monitoring, and follow-up, eliminating the need for in-person visits to healthcare providers and thereby saving time (<https://telehealth.hhs.gov/patients/understanding-telehealth/>).<sup>1-3</sup>

Patient satisfaction plays a crucial role in the widespread adoption of telehealth services. The expansion of telehealth offerings hinges on the satisfaction levels of both patients and healthcare providers.<sup>4</sup> Previous research extensively delved into the satisfaction of both parties regarding telemedicine utilization. A comprehensive review study on telemedicine highlights high levels of patient satisfaction, with reported rates ranging from 95% to 100% when comparing telemedicine to traditional in-person appointments. Patients attribute their satisfaction to various factors, including the convenience of reduced travel times and cost savings.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, studies in Norway and the United States (US) also reveal significant proportions of satisfied patients with telemedicine.<sup>5,6</sup> When it comes to service quality, studies in the US suggest that telehealth services may offer comparable quality to face-to-face consultations.<sup>6-8</sup> Additionally, factors such as the quality of care received, telehealth's convenience, overall understanding of telehealth, and being female were identified as predictors of satisfaction with telehealth.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, providers were satisfied with telemedicine if they had been included in the development of the program, there was administrative support, technology was reliable and easy to use.<sup>4</sup> Besides, physicians perceived that the quality of healthcare through telemedicine services are comparable to in-person care and had positive attitudes towards the use of telemedicine.<sup>9</sup>

In Myanmar, the country has been struggling with a challenging situation following a military coup. The healthcare system, already ranked as one of the weakest globally, is now experiencing further decline. The situation in Myanmar is exacerbated by ongoing violations, torture, and arbitrary arrests of medical professionals by the military junta. Distressingly, reports from Insecurity Insight, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), and the John Hopkins University Center for Public Health and Human Rights (CPHHR) highlight at least 252 attacks and threats against healthcare workers and facilities within the first six months following the coup. A recent report has identified at least 387 attacks on Myanmar's health care system between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023.<sup>10,11</sup> Evidence indicates that the third wave of COVID-19 in Myanmar saw a notable surge in new infections and preventable deaths due to the paralysis of the healthcare system.<sup>12</sup>

Just a few months after the military coup in Myanmar and amidst the onset of the third wave of COVID-19, the Ministry of Health of the National Unity Government launched a telemedicine initiative named “Telekyanmar” (meaning Telehealth) (<https://www.telekyanmar.org/mm/>) in June 2021. The objective of this program is to address the challenges faced by the community in accessing healthcare services and to mitigate the potential risks posed by the military junta. The implementation of Telekyanmar aims to offer a remote medical assistance solution for the population through telecommunication technologies.

Telekyanmar was initiated to address the urgent requirement for accessible medical services and health education for Myanmar's increasingly vulnerable population. Its reach spans not only within Myanmar but also extends to 50 other countries, enabling any Myanmar citizen with internet access to seek healthcare advice through the platform. Within a mere three months of its launch, Telekyanmar's telehealth clinics were operational in 210 townships across the nation. Presently, its coverage has expanded to 321 townships out of Myanmar's total 330 townships. As of May, 2024, a total of more than 71,000 patients have registered with Telekyanmar, and there have been over 178,000 consultations provided by both general practitioners and specialist doctors.

Given the pivotal role of both clients' and providers' satisfaction in the success of telemedicine services, it is crucial to gauge their satisfaction in utilizing and providing the Telekyanmar services. Hence, the aim of the study is to explore the clients' and providers' satisfaction regarding the telehealth services offered by the Telekyanmar project in Myanmar.

## Methods

### Study design and population

A cross-sectional study was conducted utilizing quantitative research method. Data were collected online through a structured questionnaire. The study population were:

- (1) the clients who have received health care services at Telekyanmar clinics operated by the Ministry of Health, National Unity Government
- (2) the clinicians who have been working at Telekyanmar clinics run by the Ministry of Health, National Unity Government

Inclusion criteria:

- Clients aged over 18 years who seek care at Telekyanmar during the data collection period
- Clinicians from different disciplines of all genders who are currently working at Telekyanmar clinics and have worked at Telekyanmar clinics for at least one month

Exclusion criteria:

- Clients who are illiterate
- Clinicians who have joined Telekyanmar for less than a month

### Sample size and sampling

#### *Clients*

The minimum required sample size is calculated as “289” by using the estimation of proportion formula with the proportion of clients who are satisfied with Telekyanmar services as 75%, precision of 5%, and 95% confidence level. Adding 5% non-response rate, the total sample size becomes “305”.

$$n = z^2 * p * q / d^2$$

For estimating the infinite population proportion,

$$\text{Proportion } (p) = 0.75, \text{Error } (d) = 0.05$$

$$\text{Alpha } (\alpha) = 0.05, Z(0.975) = 1.95$$

$$\text{Sample size } (n) = 289$$

Adding 5% non-response rate, sample size = 305

#### *Clinicians*

The minimum required sample size for clinicians is calculated as 78 by using the estimation of finite population proportion formula with the proportion of clinicians who are satisfied with telemedicine services as 80%,<sup>13</sup> precision of 7%, total number of finite population as (200 volunteers) and 95% confidence level.<sup>14,15</sup>

$$n = \frac{Np(1-p)z_{1-\frac{\alpha}{2}}^2}{d^2(N-1) + p(1-p)z_{1-\frac{\alpha}{2}}^2}$$

Proportion ( $p$ ) = proportion of clinicians who are satisfied with telemedicine service = 0.8

Error ( $d$ ) = 0.07

Consecutive sampling was applied till the required sample size is achieved for both clients and providers.

### Data collection

Quantitative data collection was carried out using the structured questionnaire distributed through the online platform using the KoboCollect<sup>16</sup> for both clients and providers.

Regarding the recruitment of clients, a separate research team conducted the survey, ensuring that service providers had no access to clients' responses. Eligible clients were informed about the assessment details, particularly the voluntary nature of participation. It was highlighted that refusal to participate in the assessment would not impact their healthcare services, while anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed. Upon obtaining consent, clients were provided with a survey link. Data collection occurred via Telekyanmar messenger, approximately two hours after their consultation, following a thorough explanation. To avoid duplication, the fundamental protection feature within KoboCollect was utilized, preventing multiple submissions by the same user on the same browser and device.

Similarly, the clinicians from Telekyanmar clinics were explained about the objectives of the assessment, voluntary nature of participation and ensured their anonymity and confidentiality of the information. After getting their consent, clinicians were provided with an assessment link.

### Data management and analysis

The data file was exported from KoboCollect into Excel. Subsequent data management and analysis were carried out in both Microsoft Excel and R Studio. Descriptive statistics, such as mean/median or frequency and percentage, were utilized as appropriate.

Ratings of satisfaction for the themes by the clinicians were taken as the scores that ranged from "0" to "10" for each theme. It was categorized as "unsatisfied" and "satisfied" by using the cut-off point of "6" for each theme. Scores of "0 to 6" were presented as "unsatisfied" and scores of ">6" were defined as "satisfied". Total rating scores on the 7 items of satisfaction was calculated which ranged from "0" to "70" and categorized as "satisfied" and "unsatisfied" based on the cutoff value of "42".

### Ethical consideration

Objectives of the assessment were described at the start of the assessment form and informed consent was taken from all the participants as the first part of the online survey form. Only after agreeing to the consent, the participants can continue to answer the survey questions. Potential participant can deny by choosing "No" to the question "Do you agree to participate in the study?". Then, it will be the end of the survey form. Anonymity and confidentiality of the participants' information were strictly ensured. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee, the Ministry of Health, National Unity Government (NUG), Myanmar (Ethics/NUG-MOH/2023/01; Ethics/NUG-MOH/2023/03) on February 16 2023. The study was started in Jan 2023 and data collection was initiated in March 2023.

## Results

**Table 1** describes the background characteristics of clients and providers included in the study. A total of 306 clients and 79 clinicians took part in the assessment. The majority, comprising 73.9% and 69.6%, were female. The mean age of the

**Table 1. Background characteristics of clients and providers included in the study.**

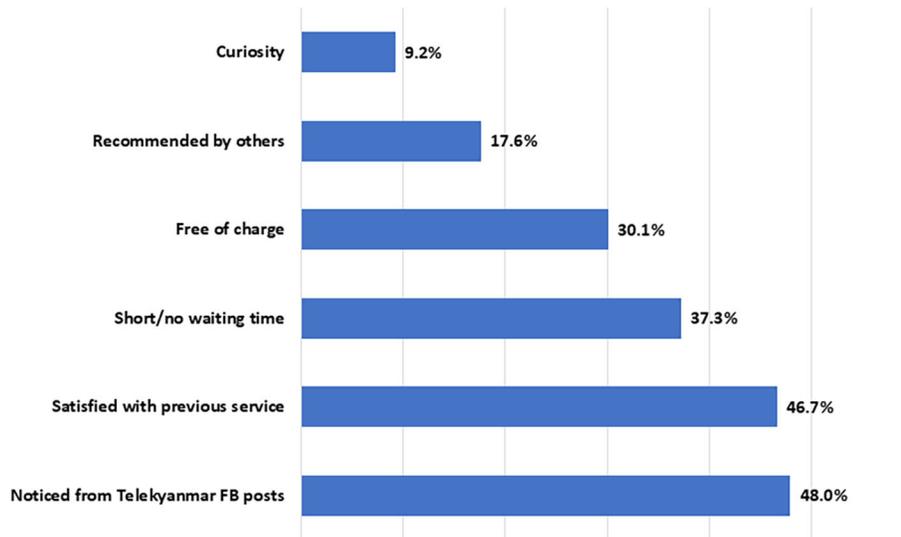
Characteristics	Clients N (%) (n=306)	Providers N (%) (n=79)
Gender		
Male	77 (25.2)	24 (30.4)
Female	226 (73.9)	55 (69.6)
Others	3 (1.0)	-
Age		
Mean ± SD	33.2 ± 13.6	35.6 ± 6.8
Min – Max	18 – 87	25 – 56
Residence		
Inside country	262 (85.6)	46 (58.2)
Outside country	44 (14.4)	33 (41.8)
Type of clinic <sup>^</sup>		
General clinic	241 (78.8)	40 (50.6)
Specialty clinic	65 (21.2)	49 (62.1)

<sup>^</sup>Multiple responses are allowed for providers.

clients was  $33.2 \pm 13.6$  years and the mean age of the clinicians was  $35.6 \pm 6.8$  years. Over 85% of the clients reside within the country while 58.2% of clinicians reside inside the country. Among the participants, 78.8% of the clients sought care at general clinics, while 21.2% opted for specialist clinics for their current illness. Over half (50.6%) of the clinicians were from the general clinics.

The reasons for choosing Telekyanmar for the current illness by the patients are illustrated in Figure 1. Most common reason was “noticed from Telekyanmar Facebook (FB) posts” indicated by 48% of the clients which was followed by “satisfied with previous service” (46.7%), “short/no waiting time” (37.3%), and “free of charge” (30.1%).

As shown in Table 2, various aspects of Telekyanmar services were examined, with the question regarding “health staff respect for privacy” receiving the highest proportion of “good” and “excellent” responses at 96.1%. The questions on “health staff answered your questions” and “thoroughness, carefulness & skillfulness of the health staff you consult” also



**Figure 1.** Reasons for choosing Telekyanmar for current illness as responded by clients (Multiple responses).

**Table 2.** Clients’ responses on satisfaction towards Telekyanmar services.

Statement	Poor (n, %)	Fair (n, %)	Good (n, %)	Excellent (n, %)
Your personal comfort in using the telehealth system	1 (0.3)	23 (7.5)	<b>177 (57.8)</b>	<b>105 (34.3)</b>
The length of the time with the health staff you consult	-	19 (6.2)	<b>166 (54.2)</b>	<b>121 (39.5)</b>
The explanation of your condition by the health staff	2 (0.7)	22 (7.2)	<b>139 (45.4)</b>	<b>143 (46.7)</b>
The explanation of your treatment by the health staff	4 (1.3)	27 (8.8)	<b>154 (50.3)</b>	<b>121 (39.5)</b>
Thoroughness, carefulness & skillfulness of the health staff you consult	1 (0.3)	23 (7.5)	<b>145 (47.4)</b>	<b>137 (44.8)</b>
The courtesy, respect, sensitivity & friendliness of the health staff you consult	2 (0.7)	13 (4.2)	<b>129 (42.2)</b>	<b>162 (52.9)</b>
The health staff respect your privacy	-	12 (3.9)	<b>157 (51.3)</b>	<b>137 (44.8)</b>
The health staff answered your questions	-	15 (4.9)	<b>132 (43.1)</b>	<b>159 (52.0)</b>
	<b>Very dissatisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Very satisfied</b>
Overall satisfaction	-	10 (3.3)	<b>110 (35.9)</b>	<b>186 (60.8)</b>

**Table 3. Clinicians' satisfaction scores and status towards telehealth services.**

Characteristics	Mean score $\pm$ SD	Satisfied (>6 score) (n, %)
Quality of clinical consultation	7.6 $\pm$ 1.4	63 (79.7)
Communication with patients	7.8 $\pm$ 1.3	69 (87.3)
Investigation request	6.1 $\pm$ 1.7	33 (41.8)
Diagnosis accuracy	6.9 $\pm$ 1.3	55 (69.6)
Treatment prescription	7.5 $\pm$ 1.3	62 (78.5)
Workload	7.3 $\pm$ 2.3	57 (72.2)
Documentation	7.6 $\pm$ 1.6	61 (77.2)
Total/Overall	51.0 $\pm$ 7.5	70 (88.6)

received the second and third highest proportions of good and excellent responses (95.1% and 91.2%). On the other hand, lowest proportion of “good” and “excellent” responses was identified as 89.9% concerning the explanation of treatment by the health staff. Regarding the overall treatment experience, 60.8% of clients reported being very satisfied, while 35.9% reported satisfied with the Telekyanmar services they had received.

Clinicians' satisfaction scores on the different themes of telehealth service are described in Table 3. These were rated on the scale of “0” to “10”. The highest satisfaction score was 7.8  $\pm$  1.3 which was rated for communication with patients. The second highest score was rated for quality of clinical consultation (7.6  $\pm$  1.4) and documentation (7.6  $\pm$  1.6). Third highest score was for treatment prescription (7.5  $\pm$  1.3). Lowest satisfaction score was concerned with the investigation request (6.1  $\pm$  1.7). After categorization using the score >6 as satisfied, 87.3% of clinicians reported their satisfaction on “communication with patients”, 79.7% satisfied with “quality of clinical consultation”, and 78.5% satisfied with “treatment prescription”. Overall satisfaction was reported by 88.6% of clinicians.

## Discussion

This study explored the clients' and providers' satisfaction on the telemedicine services provided by “Telekyanmar online clinics” following the military coup in Myanmar. The results indicated that over 95% of the clients were satisfied with various aspects of Telekyanmar services, while over 88% of clinicians reported being satisfied with the telemedicine services they provided. Satisfaction was notably high regarding communication with patients, the quality of clinical consultations, and treatment prescriptions. The adoption and expansion of telehealth services rely on maintaining high satisfaction levels among both patients and providers.<sup>4</sup>

Prior studies have investigated patient satisfaction with telehealth services. A study in the US found that 94 to 99% of patients were satisfied with these services.<sup>6</sup> A review study reported that different aspects of telemedicine services were satisfactory including addressing patients' concerns, communication with health care providers, its usefulness, and reliability.<sup>17</sup> Consistent with the majority of previous studies, the current assessment revealed that over 95% of clients were satisfied with their overall treatment experience.

A comprehensive review highlighted that patients' satisfaction with telemedicine is often influenced by factors such as cost savings and reduced travel time.<sup>4</sup> In the present study, although the influencing factors were not identified, reasons for choosing Telekyanmar service included satisfaction with previous services, short waiting times, and the service being free of charge. These findings may reflect the factors related the clients' satisfaction on Telekyanmar services in Myanmar.

Similarly, prior studies have reported the clinicians' perception and satisfaction on various aspects of using telemedicine.<sup>9,13,18</sup> A study in the US documented that 80% of clinicians perceived telemedicine as cost-effective and 76% believed it offered increased flexibility in patient care activities. In addition, clinicians perceived that the quality of care provided via telemedicine was comparable to that of in-person visits.<sup>9</sup> According to a study done in Indonesia, 78% of the clinicians were satisfied with the telemedicine system overall, 77% were content with the ease of using telemedicine equipment, and 88% interested to continue using the telemedicine.<sup>13</sup> In line with these findings, the current study found that 88.6% of the clinicians reported overall satisfaction with telehealth services.

Telekyanmar, which translates to Telehealth, was established to meet the healthcare needs of people in Myanmar, where healthcare services have been severely disrupted by the military coup. Reports from Insecurity Insight, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), and the Johns Hopkins University Center for Public Health and Human Rights (CPHHR) indicate that healthcare providers and infrastructure have been targeted by the military.<sup>10,11</sup> Amid this crisis, Telekyanmar online clinics have delivered crucial healthcare services, conducting over 178,000 consultations within three years of their launch. The current study highlights high levels of satisfaction with these services among both clients and providers.

There were few limitations that should be acknowledged. The study relied on self-reported satisfaction from both clients and clinicians, which could not be verified by other measures. The cross-sectional design captures satisfaction at a single point in time, which limits the study's ability to track potential changes in satisfaction levels over time. Both clinicians and clients included in the study were providers and users of Telekyanmar clinics which may limit the generalization of the findings to other telemedicine services in Myanmar.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Telekyanmar online clinics are effectively addressing the healthcare needs of Myanmar's population following the military coup, with high levels of satisfaction from both clients and providers, which is essential for the continued success of telemedicine services.

## Data availability

### Underlying data

### Extended data

Figshare: Underlying data for "Telemedicine services through "Telekyanmar online clinics" following the military coup in Myanmar: Clients' and providers' satisfaction"

Mon M-M, Thant KS. Clients' and clinicians' data.xlsx. November 2024. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.27539190.v1>.<sup>19</sup>

The questionnaire used for the research is available in Figshare data repository.

Mon, Myo-Myo; Thant, Kyaw Soe (2024). Questionnaire for clinicians' and clients' satisfaction on telehealth services provided by Telekyanmar project in Myanmar. figshare. Dataset. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.28054781.v1>.<sup>20</sup>

Data are available under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) (CC-BY 4.0).

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# Open Peer Review

Current Peer Review Status: ?

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Version 1

Reviewer Report 06 June 2025

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**Victor Patterson**

University of Khartoum, Khartoum, Khartoum, Sudan

Good study but important to include specialties of clinicians and also symptoms of clients if possible. Data collection was completed in September 2023 and the authors should comment on what has happened to this service since then. Is it expanding or has it collapsed? Have more clinicians become involved? This is very important.

**Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?**

Yes

**Is the study design appropriate and is the work technically sound?**

Yes

**Are sufficient details of methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?**

Yes

**If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?**

Partly

**Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?**

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?**

Yes

**Competing Interests:** No competing interests were disclosed.

**Reviewer Expertise:** Teleneurology

**I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of**

**expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however I have significant reservations, as outlined above.**

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