



## Telephone based digital triage in urgent care: Routine data project

**Study name:** Telephone based digital triage in urgent care provision: A routine data analysis of patients' service use and health outcomes before and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This forms part of a wider PhD project at Warwick Medical School.

### Project summary:

Telephone based care services that provide urgent care often use digitally supported 'telephone triage'. This involves a health care service staff member using a 'digital triage tool' (a computer system) to help refer the patient to the most appropriate service to receive health care; in part this helps health care services manage high demand. The digital triage tool is used by the clinician to input the patient's symptoms in order to automatically generate referral or self-care advice. At present, there is little evidence about the safety of this approach even though it is in widespread use.

This research aims to understand how telephone triage affects patients' use of other health care services (such as A&E), and what happens to patients following telephone triage, in terms of their safety and health. The research will analyse anonymised, pre-existing data from NHS providers in order to better understand how these telephone triage services are used and how they affect patient health. Urgent care providers taking part in this project include: Practice Plus Group (<https://practiceplusgroup.com/>), Mastercall (<http://www.mastercall.org.uk/>), Bardoc (<http://bardoc.co.uk/>) and gtd healthcare (<https://www.gtdhealthcare.co.uk/>).

The project uses 'data linkage' (linking different patient level datasets) which is being done by NHS Digital. Data linkage will allow for investigation into what happens to patients after they are triaged, for example do they visit A&E after they have been advised to? The data linkage process involves some use of personal data, however only anonymised data will be used in the research project.

Understanding how telephone triage is used should help identify areas for improvement that will benefit patients. Overall, this research aims to identify how services can be improved, to ultimately improve patient safety and care.

### Interested in finding out more?

We would like to involve patients and the public in this project. There will be opportunities for involvement throughout the project. If you would like to take part or want to find out more about how data is being used in this project, please email [ash.sexton@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:ash.sexton@warwick.ac.uk) or call 02476 151405 to find out more.

### Data opt-out

If you had called one of the named services above between April 2019 and September 2020 and would like your data to be removed from this research dataset, please contact Ash Sexton using the details above.