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Patient efficacy in telehealth is moderated by distress among patients with cancer: a cross-sectional survey study

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BACKGROUD

The COVID-19 pandemic increased the use of telehealth visits to reduce potential exposure, which was especially critical for patients with cancer, an immunocompromised population vulnerable to complications due to COVID-19. The extent to which patients with cancer view telehealth visits as meeting their medical needs during a time of emotional distress was investigated.

METHODS

- A cross-sectional survey design was used
- Survey packets emailed to 1944 patients with 94 final participants
- Patients completed the following
 - Emotional Thermometer¹
 - Telehealth usability questionnaire (TUQ)²
 - Perceived Efficacy in Patient-Physician Interactions (PEPPI-5) scale³

References

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2. Parmanto B, Lewis AN Jr, Graham KM, Bertolet MH. Development of the Telehealth Usability Questionnaire (TUQ). Int J Telerehabil. 2016 Jul 1;8(1):3-10. doi: 10.5195/ijt.2016.6196. PMID: 27563386; PMCID: PMC4985278.

3. Maly RC, Frank JC, Marshall GN, DiMatteo MR, Reuben DB. Perceived efficacy in patient-physician interactions (PEPPI): validation of an instrument in older persons. J Am Geriatr Soc. 1998 Jul;46(7):889-94. doi: 10.1111/j.1532-5415.1998.tb02725.x. PMID: 9670878.



Low emotional distress and high confidence with tech impacts cancer patients’ choice of in person or telehealth visits.



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Table 1: Summary from GLM estimating patient efficacy during telehealth

Parameter	Estimate	Standard Error	t-Value	p-Value
Intercept	0.04	1.41	0.03	0.97
TUQ	1.39	0.25	5.58	< 0.0001
Emotional Thermometer (low)	6.03	1.8	3.35	0.01
TUQ x Emotional Thermometer	-1.0	0.32	-3.15	0.002

GLM = generalized linear modeling TUQ = Telehealth Usability Questionnaire

Figure 1

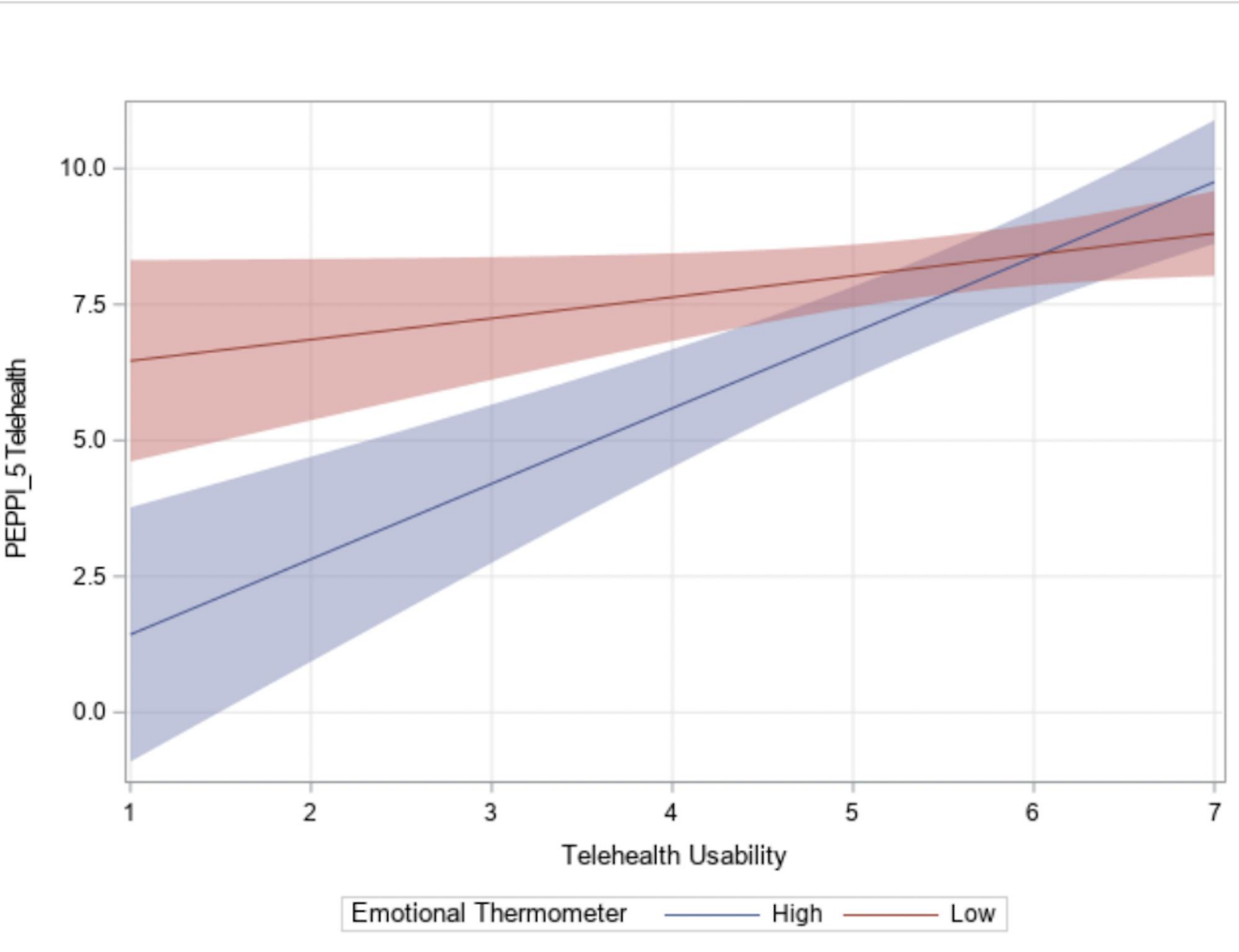


Figure 1. Interaction of TUQ and emotional thermometer on patient self-efficacy

RESULTS

Patients experiencing low emotional distress and high comfort with technology had higher self-efficacy in communicating with providers via telehealth.

CONCLUSION

Telehealth is a convenient and effective modality. In times of emotional distress, in-person clinic visits may result in greater patient self-efficacy to satisfy health-related needs.

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