



e-Detailing FAQs

NaRCAD

Getting Started

1. What challenges will I face with virtual visits?

Not every clinician will be adept at videoconferencing technology, will have a webcam, or will be comfortable using a video platform. Hopefully, since most people are transferring to working from home amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, some of these barriers are already being confronted. Webcams allows detailers to gauge clinician body language and evaluate whether the clinician is paying attention. Anticipating and planning for technological challenges will help. The Veteran Health Administration (VHA) sends a guide of the videoconferencing platform prior to visits with clinicians. Technology guides can empower clinicians to understand the platform without admitting they don't understand the technology, while also allowing the detailers to have answers readily available for frequently asked questions.

In-person cold calls to recruit clinicians are not feasible for virtual visits. Programs that recruit clinicians in-person will have to adapt and recruit over the phone or email. During the [NaRCAD 2019 e-detailing conference panel](#), programs claimed that they have the same success rate for scheduling virtual visits, but there hasn't been any formal research on this. VISN 19 claimed that about one person out four have been successfully recruited for virtual visits. Clinicians can easily ignore a detailer over an email/phone call, so preparing a convincing case for gatekeepers can go a long way.

To date, there is little evidence to inform proven models of effectiveness for e-detailing. NaRCAD is thankful to be able to draw from a diverse and growing cross-section of real-world practices in e-detailing, as shared by our community of experts. We are all learning what works best, and many decisions on how to conduct visits will need to be made by instinct until more research is completed.

2. What platform should I use for virtual visits?

A videoconferencing platform that allows for shared screen is ideal for virtual visits. Institutions are offering videoconferencing platforms for their employees for free or reduced cost during the COVID-19 pandemic. Investigating whether your institution offers a platform can save costs and pool resources if your institution offers support. Academic detailing programs have used Skype, Zoom, and even a patient-to-clinician telehealth platform (for detailers housed within the same clinic). Not every clinician is going to be able to do a visit with a videoconferencing platform (no webcam, not comfortable with technology). Be flexible with how you conduct your visits. Even if the clinician can only see your face, it will help the clinician recognize who you are for follow-up visit. You do not want technology to be a distraction. There will be technological challenges with every platform – we recommend practicing visits with your team or other colleagues or friends before completing visits.

3. Why have AD programs used virtual detailing in the past?

Virtual Detailing or e-detailing has historically been used to access clinicians in remote locations, cut down travel time, or provide a quick follow-up visit. Detailers who have done e-detailing have preferred to start with an initial visit in-person to build rapport and then continue from there virtually. Rarely, detailers do an initial visit virtually, and that is usually for clinicians who are inaccessible for visiting in person. Programs who continue to do proceeding visits virtually claim that this modality is more efficient while still being high quality. Detailers claim that virtual visits tend to work best for clinicians who are familiar with the concept of academic detailing.

Materials/Detailing Aids

1. How should I use materials for e-visits?

Detailers still want to retain control of their materials in virtual detailing visits, so it is ideal to have an option for shared screen. For visits over the phone or without a shared screen option, materials must be sent prior to the visit, so they can be discussed during the detailing session. Materials can be shared through email after visits for visits using a webcam. Using two screens can be useful to have all your materials and tools up in a second screen. You may discover that you need extra materials for your virtual visits, which may be in the form of slides or other formats. You cannot drop any swag or items that you may have dropped in person, however, the VHA detailers still sometimes show props over virtual visits (i.e., show how to use naloxone).

Outreach

1. How should I recruit for virtual visits?

Programs have found similar success rates for scheduling virtual visits compared to in-person visits, but there hasn't been any formal research on this. During the [e-detailing panel presentation](#) at the NaRCAD 2019 conference, BC PAD and the VHA claimed that recruitment rates were not so different from what they were used to for in-person visits. Both BC PAD and the VA are well established programs, and the rates could be influenced by their clinicians' familiarity with academic detailing. VISN 19 claims that about one person out four have been successfully recruited for a virtual visit. However, it is easier for clinicians to ignore you over an email/phone call than if you are used to doing cold calls in person.

Conducting Visits

1. How do you grow rapport virtually?

Building relationships through virtual visits will come with practice. Webcams can help establish relationships, so the clinician and the detailer can recognize each other's faces and can reduce

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miscommunication through reading lips and body language. Keep the evidence-base for academic detailing known to achieve behavior change in mind - adhere to the one-to-one approach using motivational interviewing techniques.

Remember that your primary goal with e-detailing is to support clinicians as much as possible during this time, all while maintaining and continuing to build a strong relationship based on usefulness and trust. Even if your first e-detailing visit results only in your clinician succeeding for the first time at utilizing videoconferencing, consider this a successful visit! Positive e-detailing interactions are the foundation for moving closer to tangible behavior change within practices and maintaining key relationships to achieve longer-term goals.