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Belen Herrero, Valentine Weber, Erin Kennedy, Gligorka Raskovic et Coleen Timm

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## THE USE OF DIGITAL TABLETS EASES THE WAY TO COMPASSIONATE CARE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**Belen Herrero<sup>1\*</sup>, Valentine Weber<sup>1</sup>, Erin Kennedy<sup>1</sup>, Gligorka Raskovic<sup>1</sup>, Coleen Timm<sup>1</sup>**

1\* Corresponding author: McGill University Health Centre, Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
belen.herrero@muhc.mcgill.ca

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Patient communication, Compassion

**OBJECTIVE:** A patient communication program was implemented as a response to hospitals visiting restrictive policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of the program was to facilitate communication between patients and families, mainly through the use of digital tablets; thus program performance was evaluated by selecting the number of calls performed, the average call time, and the percentage of patients that used the program more than once.

**METHODS:** A communication service for hospitalized patients who did not have access to a personal electronic device or were unable to use their electronic device was launched at different MUHC hospitals. A dedicated team of re-deployed employees was available to help patients connect with their loved ones using a hospital tablet or telephone.

**RESULTS:** A total of 806 calls were performed between April and November 2020. Eighty one percent of the calls were performed during the non-visitors policy implementation, being video calls preferred over

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phone calls. The average call time was 15 min, 34% of the patients had a video call with their loved one more than once and 40% of the calls were performed in the intensive care unit.

**CONCLUSION:** The patient communication program can be described as a new delivery model of compassionate care. It was effective, helped reduce patients' isolation and met the needs of family members and caregivers during the hospital non-visitors policy directed by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux de Québec during the Covid-19 pandemic. ■