

# Continuing Tele-Web Dietitian Consultation (TWDC) at Community Setting during the Fifth Outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic in Hong Kong (HK)

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## Introduction:

The trend of telehealth is increasing in HK especially during the 5th wave of COVID-19 pandemic. The ways of people receiving healthcare services were changed due to social distancing measures; numerous non-emergency healthcare services including dietary consultations in the community were affected. Our team have continued TWDC to support patients in need of dietary advice while adhering social distancing measures since 2020. Accumulated experience over the past two years, TWDC has been enhanced on the information exchange with the patients through online platform.



## Methods:

Operation procedures with references on relevant overseas guidelines was established, emphasizing on patients' confidentiality (i.e. security of environment and tools like telephone-call or appropriate online software in a private room). Selection of suitable patients, consent on informed choices, limitations of TWDC and professional indemnity coverage were also being reviewed. Visual aids of the nutritional education materials, virtual supermarket tour, and exchange of information (i.e. anthropometric measurement) were used with ZOOM for the TWDC.

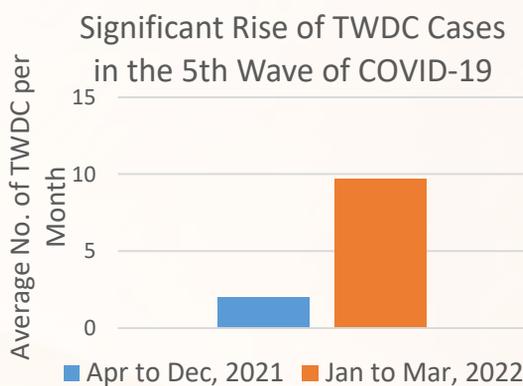


## Results:

During 1st Apr., to 31st Dec., 2021, the COVID-19 conditions were relatively less severe, there were 18 (2 news and 16 follow-ups). Average number of TWDC was 2 cases per month. Whilst during 1st Jan., until Mar., 2022, when the 5th wave of COVID-19 started in HK, the number of patients received TWDC service rose to 29 cases (2 news and 27 follow-ups).

With more people in HK have used ZOOM since the pandemic, patients appeared more accepting to TWDC via ZOOM, with patient showing kitchen environments/foods stored /meal portions at meal times at home in additional to traditional food records. It significantly facilitated dietitian's assessment and advice-giving process.

Periods of the Years	Total TWDC Cases Attended
April to December, 2021 (9 Months)	18 (2 news and 16 follow-ups)
January to March, 2022 (3 Months)	29 (2 news and 27 follow-ups)



## Conclusions:

TWDC was used to increase access to community dietetic services despite during severe COVID-19 pandemic and opened up opportunities for outpatients who were unable to attend face to face clinic. Patients' familiarity with the online platforms could affect the usage of TWDC, therefore, it may be worthwhile to investigate different platforms or software such to broaden population and usage.

**Keywords:** Dietitians, COVID19, Tele-web

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