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Public Awareness and Acceptance of Telemedicine in Japan

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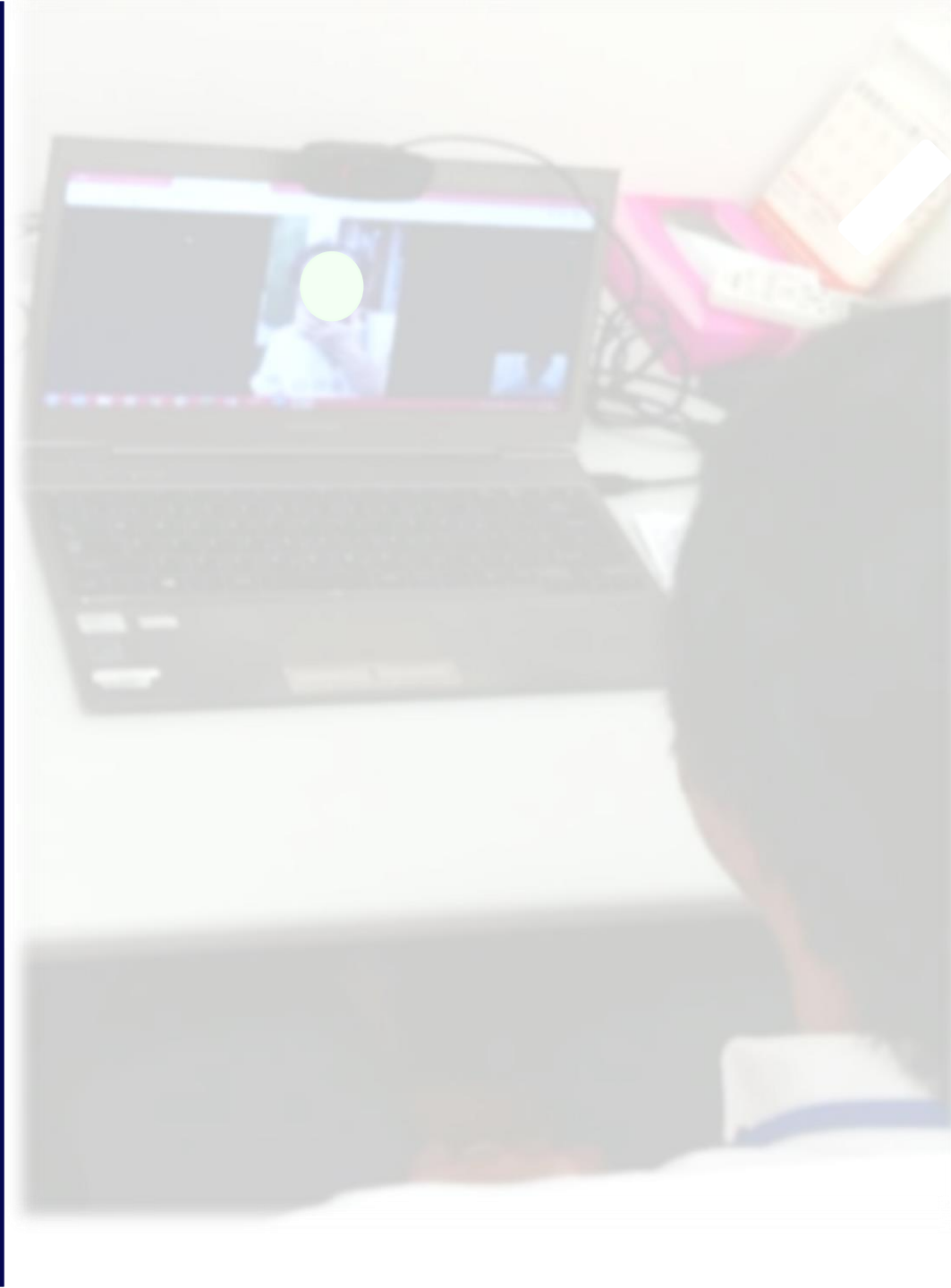
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Purpose

- **Examine public awareness and acceptability of telemedicine in Japan.**
- **Determine the major issues which hinder the growth of telemedicine from Japanese people's views.**



Method

- Understanding users' needs and shortcomings to address these needs are necessary to improve the service.
- Semi-structured questionnaire (12 multiple-choice questions) was undertaken with 84 participants (63 Female and 21 male) between February and April 2021.
- Selecting the survey participants was based on their busy works with limited vacations time to visit hospitals.
- The interview guide was informed by a literature survey in this study area.
- Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Kyushu University Hospital, Permission No 2021-15.

Result

- The participants' ages are ranging from 20 to 63 years.
- They are administrative employees working in different business sectors at 2 public universities in the Fukuoka city.
- All participants have no physical disabilities, and they had never experienced telemedicine.
- The majority visit the hospitals about 2 times a year.



Result

Table 1 The Characteristic of Participants

Gender N=84	Age N=84	Physical Disability	City	Occupation N=84	Hospital visit (in a year)	N=84	Experience of Telemedicine	
Female N 63 (75%)	20-29	No	Fukuoka	Administrative employees University A N 53 (63%) University B N 31 (37%)	Once a week	52 times	No	
	30-39				17 (20%)	2 (2%)		
	40-49				16 (19%)	26 times		2 (3%)
	50-59				28 (34%)	12 times		16 (19%)
	60-69				17 (20%)	6 times		6 (7%)
Male N 21 (25%)	60-69	6 (7%)	2 times	24 (29%)				
	Once a year	One time	12 (14%)					
	No visit	0	0					
	No answer	—	22 (26%)					
100%	100%			100%				

Result

Table 2 Awareness of Telemedicine (N= 84)

Issues	Responses (N=84)				
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Not at all		
Current perception of telemedicine	14 (17%)	➔ 59 (70%)	11 (13%)		
People satisfaction with the amount of information available on telemedicine	3 (4%)	➔ 59 (70%)	22 (26%)		
Information sources	➔ Media 51 (53%)	Hospital 20 (21%)	Website 12 (12%)	No answer 11 (12%)	Friends 2 (2%)
Available information	Positive perception 31 (36%)	Negative perception 6 (7%)	➔ No detailed information 43 (50%)	Other 6 (7%)	
Additional required information	➔ Telemedicine regulations, benefits, risks, cost, etc. 68 (56%)	Patients' experiences and satisfactions with telemedicine 36 (29%)	How telemedicine is worked; such as tools, types, etc. 16 (13%)	Other 2 (2%)	
Possibilities to raise the awareness of telemedicine	➔ Set up telemedicine education program for public 52 (37%)	Encourage the use of eHealth through social media, website, email, brochures, etc. 51 (36%)	Make the use of telemedicine mandatory by policy or other means 29 (21%)	Other 8 (6%)	

Result

Figure 1

Benefits of Telemedicine from the Japanese People's Perspectives (N=72) - Multiple-choice Question

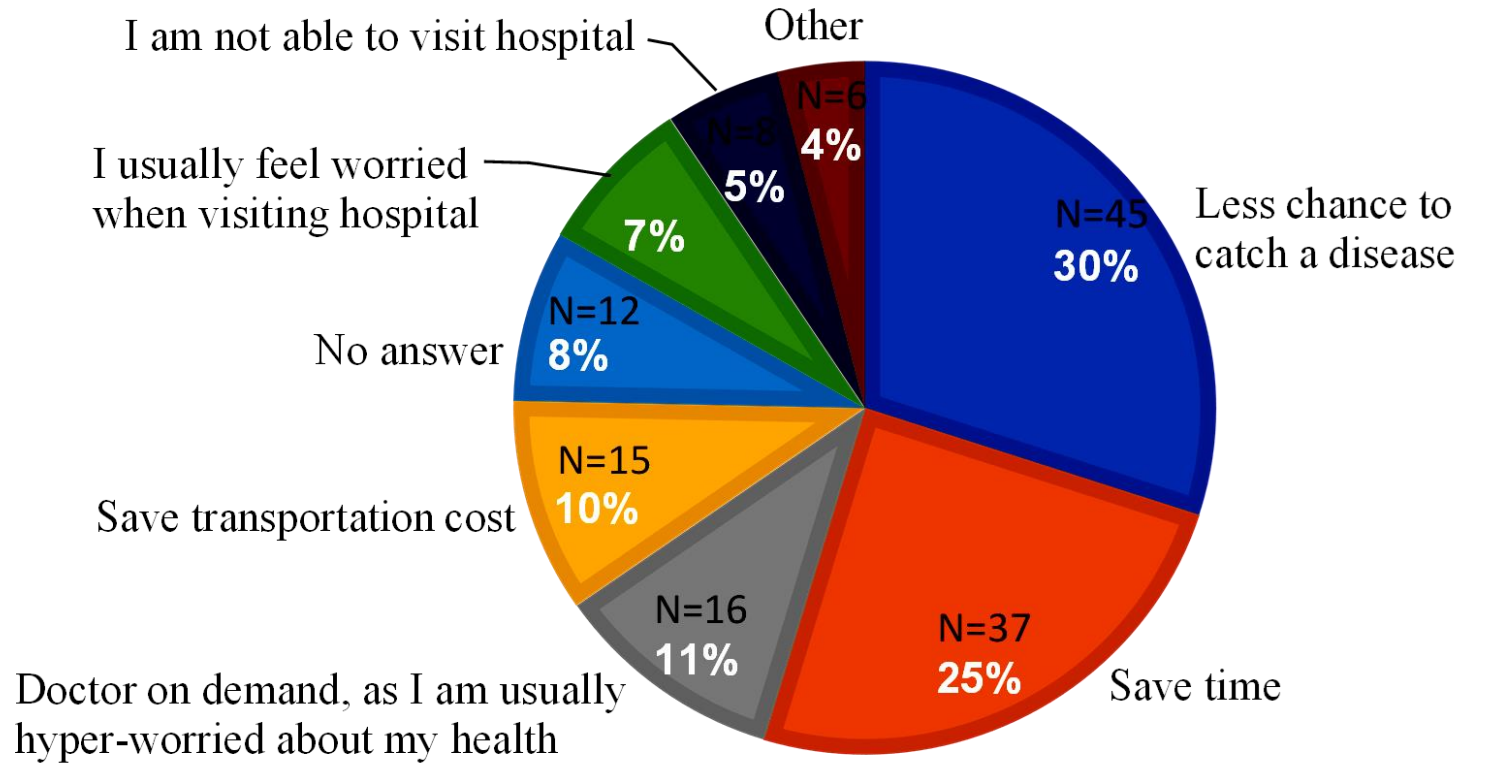


Table 3

Acceptability of Telemedicine (N= 84)

Issues	Responses		
	Very much	Not much	Not at all
Accepting to the concept of telemedicine	48	24	12
Impressed with telemedicine technology	37	41	6
Interested in virtual/online communication	41	38	5
Average	42 (51%)	34 (41%)	7 (8%)

Result

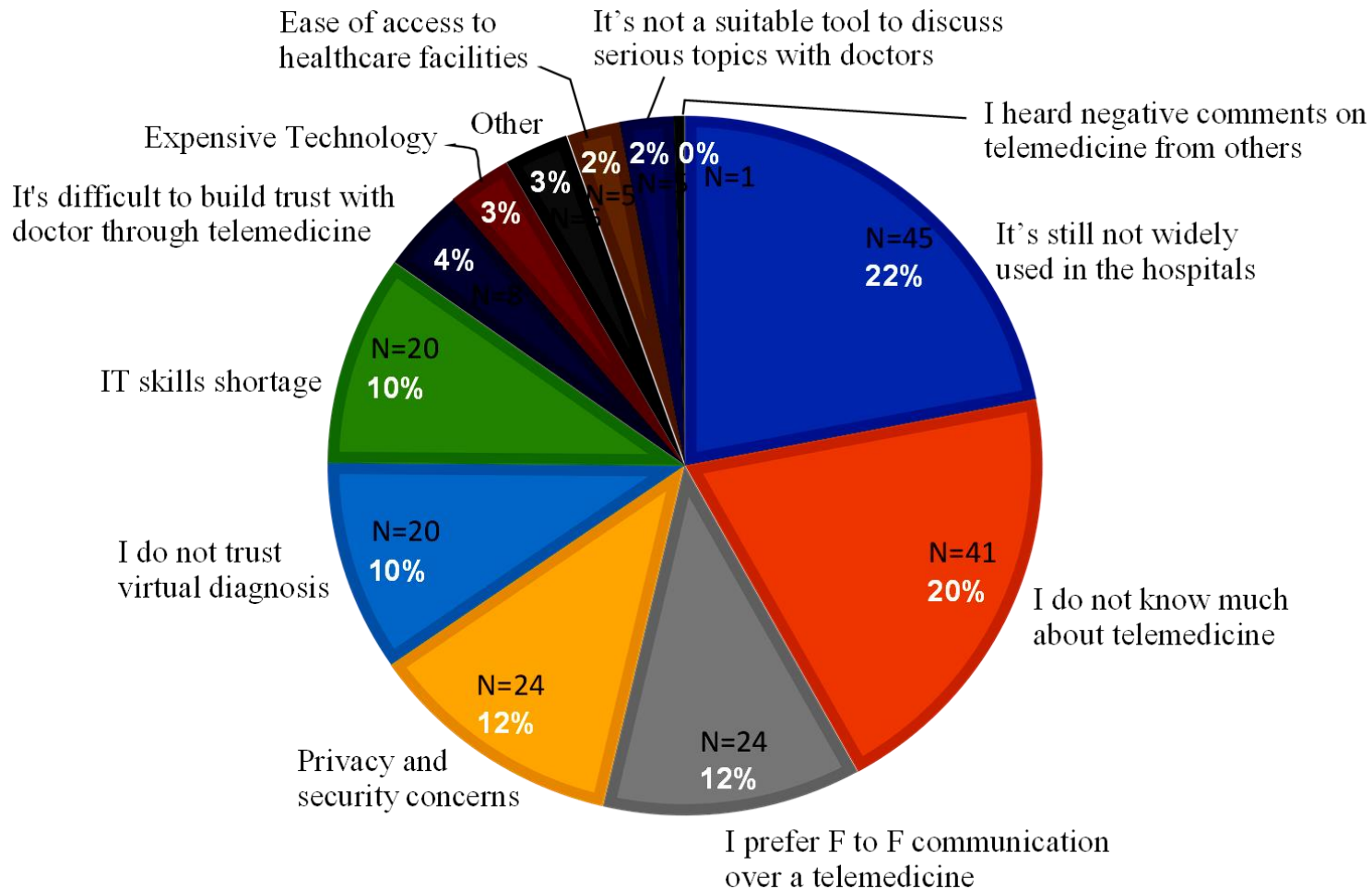


Figure 2

Why Japanese People Aren't Using Telemedicine at Present (N=84)

– Multiple-choice Question

The majority of participants are interested in telemedicine.

They indicated that telemedicine might be an effective tool to reduce the risk of infection.

However, they are not using it at present due to some issues (see Figure 2).

Discussion

- There are different issues obstruct the growth of telemedicine in Japan.
- One of these issues is related to a lack of detailed information provided for public about the service.
- For people to ask for telemedicine service, they need to understand well its possibilities and limitations.
- Based on the participants' responses, the most effective way to raise the level of awareness of telemedicine is through education programs.
- Establishing telemedicine education program is recommended to provide individuals with complete and appropriate information. This would probably change their opinions about the service.

Limitation

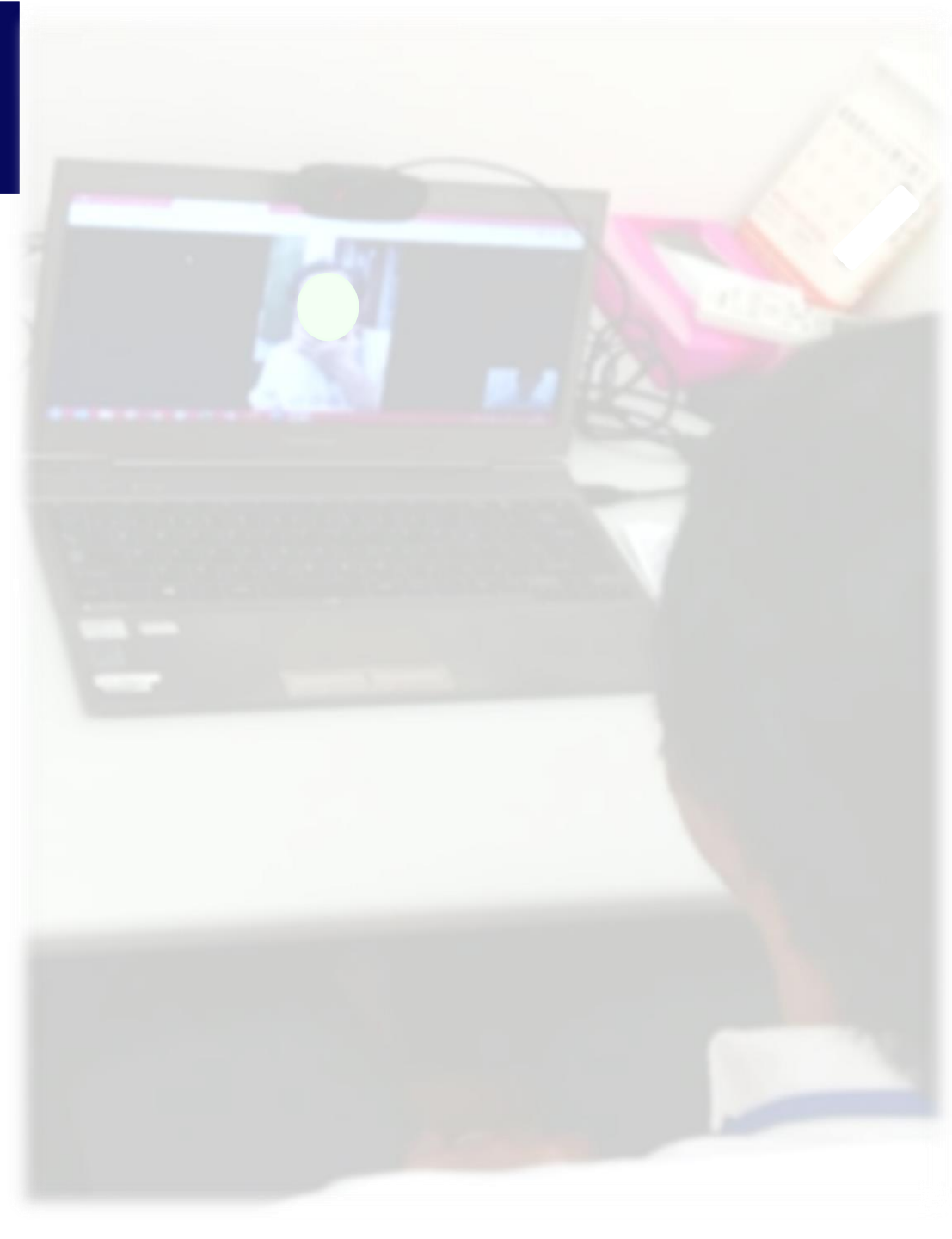
This study clarified the main reasons of slow growth of telemedicine in Japan during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey was done with limited number of Japanese participants, and the results cannot be generalized beyond the participants of a study.

The participants expressed their own perspectives for raising the public awareness of telemedicine. These may not express views of the majority of Japanese people.

Conclusion and Future Work

- Limited awareness of telemedicine plays an important role in a slow growth of the service.
- Greater public awareness about the service's regulations, benefits, and risks is an essential step for improving telemedicine market in Japan.
- This study recommended setting up education programs to provide people with detailed information about telemedicine service.
- **A large-scale survey will be run in order to pick up the current major and minor barriers to telemedicine development in Japan.**



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Thank you for your attention