

Telepsychiatry Info Sheet

Telepsychiatry is defined as electronic transmission of psychiatric consultations, advice or services in digital form from one location to another using a data communication link provided by a third party carrier, or carriers. It requires the providers to comply with the International telecommunications Union Standards which cover all types of videoconferencing from massive bandwidth to internet use. If X-rays are required for a psychiatric consultation, then the consultant psychiatrist must comply with DICOM Standards.

Support and Resourcing

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists encourages best practice in tele psychiatry and to this end has developed a Telepsychiatry Position Statement. To obtain a copy of this document and/or further information, assistance and support, practitioners are able to contact the College by email cpd@ranzcp.org or by visiting www.ranzcp.org.

Duration of Telepsychiatry Consultation

For items 353 to 358 the time provides a range of options equal to those provided in items 300 to 308 to allow for the appropriate treatment depending on the requirements of the treatment plan.

Number of Consultations in a Calendar Year

Items 353 to 358 may only be claimed for up to a maximum of 12 consultations in aggregate for each patient in a calendar year. Items 364 to 370 are to be claimed where face-to-face consultations are clinically indicated. Items 364 to 370 must be used to ensure that Medicare payments continue for further telepsychiatry consultations.

If the number of attendances in aggregate to which items 296 to 299, 300 to 308, 353 to 358 and 361 to 370 apply exceeds 50 for a single patient in any calendar year, any further attendances on that patient in that calendar year would be covered by items 310 to 318.

Documenting the Telepsychiatry Session

For items 353 to 370 the psychiatrist must keep a record of the treatment provided during an episode of care via telepsychiatry sessions or face-to-face consultations and must convey this in writing to the referring practitioner after the first session and then, at a minimum, after every six consultations.

Geographical

Telepsychiatry items 353 to 361 are available for use when a referred patient is located in a regional, rural or remote area. A regional, rural or remote area is classified as a **RRMA 3-7 area** under the Rural Remote Metropolitan Areas classification system.

Referred Patient Assessment and Management plan review (Item 359)

Referral for item 359 should be through the GP or participating nurse practitioner for the management of patients with mental illness. In the event that a specialist of another discipline wishes to refer a patient for

this item the referral should take place through the GP or participating nurse practitioner. Item 359 is available in instances where the GP or participating nurse practitioner initiates a review of the management plan provided under item 391, usually where the current plan is not achieving the anticipated outcome. It is expected that when a plan is reviewed, any modifications necessary will be made.

Initial Consultation

The rationale for item 361 is to improve access to psychiatric services by encouraging an increase in the number of new patients seen by each psychiatrist, while acknowledging that ongoing care of patients with severe mental illness is integral to the role of the psychiatrist. Referral for item 361 may be from a participating nurse practitioner, medical practitioner practising in general practice, a specialist or another consultant physician. It is intended that item 361 will apply once only for each new patient on the first occasion that the patient is seen by a consultant psychiatrist. It is not generally intended that item 361 will be used in conjunction with, or prior to, item 291.

The use of items 361 and 296-299 by one consultant psychiatrist does not preclude them being used by another consultant psychiatrist for the same patient.