When can telehealth enable patients to better access specialty care?

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The Challenge

How do we ensure patients get timely and appropriate access to care that meets their needs and preferences?

Patients may prefer certain types of appointments (face-to-face vs. telehealth)

Our Approach

Model patient flow through primary and specialty care

Build simulation to better understand capacity utilization and access under uncertainty while accounting for patient preference

Guide clinical decision-makers in strategies to improve patient access

Methods

Simulated patients flowing through system

Inputs

Primary Care Providers
GI Providers
Provider Capacities
Appointment Types
Appointment Costs
Patient Arrival Rates
Exit Probabilities
Patient Locations
Patient Preferences

Data From: NATIONAL POLL ON HEALTHY AGING

“In-Range” Policies
A. First available – any type
B. First available – preferred only
C. First preferred available. If no preferred, first available of any type

“Out-of-range” policies
1. First available – any type
2. First available - preferred

Results

Baseline simulation results (Example: Policy A1)

Conclusions

Simulation is a useful tool for understanding how to strategically incorporate telehealth into scheduling policies, while accounting for patient preferences.

Future work includes incorporating:

Transition probability matrix
No-shows, cancelations

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