

The effect of financial incentives on telehealth service uptake in Australia

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Policy debate regarding the continuation of temporary MBS item numbers during the COVID response calls for the introduction of financial incentives for video over telephone consultations, warranting investigation of previous financial incentives

What we did:



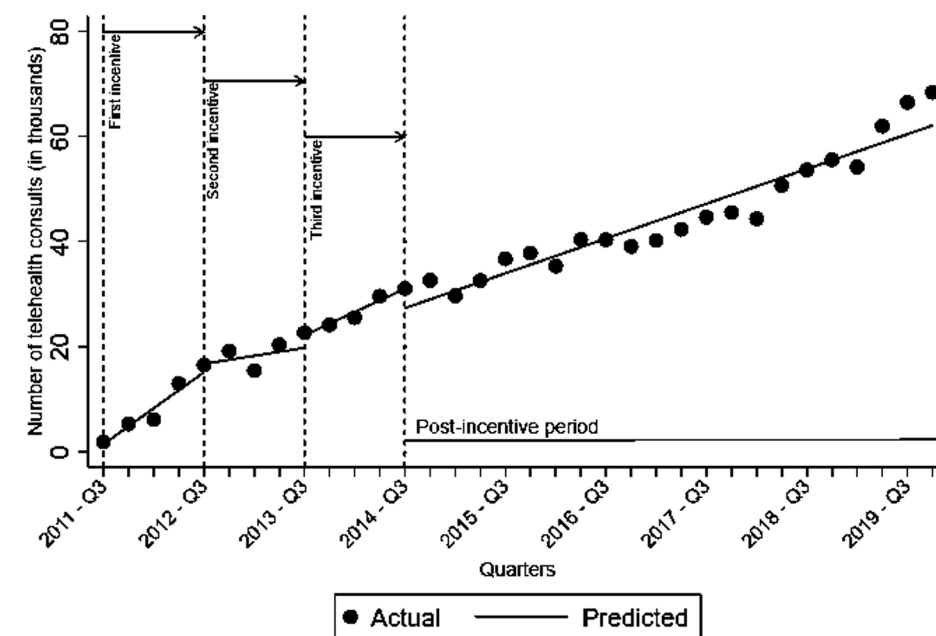
Data for MBS telehealth item codes for videoconference and telephone consultations conducted in Australia from July 2011 to December 2019 were used



An interrupted time-series (ITS) analysis using segmented regression was conducted to assess the difference in MBS telehealth activity after the implementation of MBS time-limited financial incentives in the 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 financial years

What we found:

- **Steep growth** after introduction of first incentive
- Rate of uptake **significantly decreased** after implementation of second incentive
- Rate of uptake **significantly increased** after implementation of third incentive
- **Continued growth** after cessation of financial incentives



Regression with Newey-West standard errors - lag(0)

Key findings

- Financial incentives seem to have a **small positive effect** on increasing telehealth activity
- Telehealth uptake seemingly more **reliant on other factors** aside from financial incentives

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