

Electronic portals may help patients with multiple complex conditions

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conditions. For the study, researchers focused on comparing patients' use of health services before and after portal access.

During the study period, 22.3% of all patients registered to use the patient portal. After accounting for patient characteristics and clinical needs, the researchers found that access to the portal was associated with more outpatient office visits (170 more visits per 1,000 patients per month, p

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Access to a patient portal can increase engagement in outpatient visits and reduce emergency room visits and hospitalizations in patients with multiple chronic diseases, according to a study published June 19, 2019 in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* by Mary Reed (DrPH) of Kaiser Permanente and colleagues.

An increasing number of patients in the United States are living with multiple complex chronic conditions, including [diabetes](#), asthma, congestive artery disease, congestive heart failure and hypertension. Electronic patient portals offer patients the ability to manage several aspects of their healthcare—by checking lab results, contacting providers or refilling medications, for instance. Previous studies have found improvements in healthcare associated with some portal components.

In the new study, researchers retrospectively examined the records of 165,447 patients with diabetes enrolled in the integrated delivery system of Kaiser Permanente Northern California. 22.6% of the patients had diabetes only, while the other 77.4% had diabetes plus one or more other

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