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**JAMA Publishes UAMS Study of Digital Health Visits
for Prenatal Care Before, During and After COVID-19 Pandemic**

LITTLE ROCK — A University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) study has found that COVID-19 sparked a big jump in the use of digital health services for prenatal care that remained higher than pre-pandemic levels through late 2021.

Published in [JAMA Network Open](#), the study using a national database showed that telehealth use during a 40-week pregnancy went from 1.1% for deliveries in January 2020 to 17.3% for deliveries in November 2020, before declining to 9.9% by October 2021.

“The findings could be used to design telehealth-integrated prenatal care models, but we would first need to determine the best combination of digital health and in-person visits,” said Mahip Acharya, Ph.D., the paper’s first author.

Mahip is a senior data analyst for the Rural Telehealth Evaluation Center at the UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation.

Hari Eswaran, Ph.D., is the study’s principal investigator and professor and vice chair for research in the College of Medicine Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and director of research at the institute.

The team used IQVIA PharMetrics Plus for Academics, a health insurance claims database that includes commercially insured individuals in the United States. The database provided de-identified information on 45,203 pregnancies during the study period.

Other study findings included that those with anxiety and depression were more likely to use digital health services for a prenatal appointment, and pregnant women with Medicaid used digital health appointments at higher rates during the pandemic than those with commercial insurance.

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UAMS is the state's only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute and Institute for Digital Health & Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS' clinical enterprise. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,240 students, 913 medical residents and fellows, and five dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with more than 11,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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