

Cyber-supervision during the Covid-19 pandemic: An exploratory international survey

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: This article presents the findings of an exploratory international survey on supervisees' and supervisors' experiences of cyber-supervision during the Covid-19 pandemic. The survey aimed to establish a baseline of these experiences.

METHODS: An online survey of 195 respondents was conducted. Demographic data and the supervisees' and supervisors' views were analysed descriptively. Spearman's Rho correlations were undertaken using IBM SPSS 28 to examine the associations between supervisees' and supervisors' ratings of their situation, views and experiences of cyber-supervision, and overall satisfaction and evaluation.

FINDINGS: The results showed that the respondents' supervision changed to online supervision, with video conferencing as the primary method. The supervisees and supervisors shared similar views about online supervision. Items that indicated a constructive view of online supervision correlated positively with overall satisfaction and evaluation. In contrast, items less favourable of online supervision correlated negatively with overall satisfaction and evaluation. Overall, it was found that the attitudes and perspectives of supervisees and supervisors about online supervision were related to their overall satisfaction and evaluation.

CONCLUSION: The practice implications for supervisees and supervisors using online supervision are that they discuss their attitudes and cultural perspectives about online supervision early in the relationship, particularly if they plan to use this medium regularly or in conjunction with face-to-face supervision. Further research is recommended on the influence and impact of supervisee and supervisor attitudes and cultural perspectives on online supervision.

Keywords: Supervision; ICT; Covid-19; survey; supervisees; supervisors

AOTEAROA
NEW ZEALAND SOCIAL
WORK 36(2), 24–38.

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The Covid-19 pandemic had an unprecedented effect, with many countries in the early stages of the pandemic locking down and implementing restrictions such as physical distancing and mask-wearing (Fronek et al., 2023). Social workers shifted from in-person, face-to-face practice to information and computer technologies (ICT) (Lombardi et al. 2002; Sewell et al.

2022). Social work supervision sessions changed from in-person meetings to cyber-supervision, particularly when face-to-face meetings were a risk to social workers, their supervisors, and their organisation's ability to deliver services (Mo, 2021a). Cyber-supervision involves using ICT to facilitate supervision sessions (Mo & Chan, 2023).

Literature review

The Aotearoa New Zealand literature about online supervision consists of two papers (King & Hirst, 2011; Rushton et al., 2017). King and Hirst (2011) discussed their experiences of shifting to cyber-supervision. They found that, because they had face-to-face relationships, they could adapt, learn together and work through the ethical and technological challenges of using Skype. Their paper led to the addition of a practice note on electronic supervision to the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) Supervision Policy (ANZASW, 2011). King and Hirst (2011) also discussed the importance of *whanaungatanga* and *kanohi ki te kanohi* and recommend face-to-face meetings in person initially before engaging in online supervision. Rushton et al. (2017) shared their experiences of an online peer supervision group using Zoom. They discussed the challenges and learning the non-Māori members had to negotiate concerning Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led practice, bicultural responsiveness and responding to diversity within their group. They noted the importance of *Ko wai au* (who am I) discussions and how knowing each other assisted them in navigating differences and diversity. Rushton et al. (2017) also commented that some of the group had met in person in different circumstances before establishing the group, which helped establish their supervision relationship. Currently, the only specific local professional guidance on online supervision is the Social Workers Registration Board's (SWRB) Code of Conduct, which states in Principle 10 that social workers are expected to "follow the standards that would be applied in a face-to-face supervisory relationship when using or providing supervision by technological means" (SWRB, 2016, p. 26). The recently released ANZASW Supervision Strategy 2023-2033 does not directly mention the medium of online supervision apart from a footnote reference on page 25, which relates to supervision training and equates face-to-face learning with synchronous online video conferencing learning (ANZASW, 2024).

International studies since 2020 discuss cyber-supervision in specific countries (Mo, 2021a). A Chinese study found that the cyber-supervision relationship mirrored in-person supervision in structure, content, and process (Mo & Chan, 2023). The study also noted that, within the cyber-supervision relationship, the immediacy of the responses, the overall trust in the virtual environment, clear advice, support, and a people orientation from the supervisor resulted in higher satisfaction amongst the supervisees. Another Chinese study found that, for supervisees to feel comfortable with the cyber-supervision process, they needed a supportive supervision context that attended to cultural differences (Mo, 2021b). Supervisees also needed a responsive supervisory relationship, a written contract between committed parties, and an understanding of the strengths and limitations of cyber-supervision. Selem (2021) found that, in implementing electronic group supervision in Oman during the pandemic, training in electronic supervision for supervisees, supervisor competence and technical support were important. Yuliani (2021) proposed an e-supervision model in Indonesia that incorporated a data-base system with knowledge management, training and social network management systems. In this system, the supervisees and supervisors interacted via electronic messaging and social media. Sewell et al. (2021) found increased discussions of ICT use in supervision among Canadian social workers where organisational policy provided clear direction on ICT use. For some participants, the supervisor's qualities and availability influenced their decisions to discuss their use of ICT. They also called for further research on the content and quality of ICT use in supervision and supervision discussions. Connell (2023) explored the change to online supervision during the Covid-19 pandemic in London Local Authority Children's Services. Connell (2023) found that, in general, the participants had a positive experience of online supervision, while some elements

of face-to-face, in-person supervision were missed. An established supervisory relationship and good connectivity were identified as important. Future research was also called for that explored a wider range of social work settings and drew from larger and more geographically dispersed samples (Connell, 2023). From this review, it is apparent that little is known internationally about the views and experiences of supervisees and supervisors of cyber-supervision during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study reported here aims to establish a baseline of the views and experiences of supervisees and supervisors of cyber-supervision internationally during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Method

A survey instrument was developed from a review of supervision research (O'Donoghue & Engelbrecht, 2021). Demographic information was gathered from multiple-choice questions. Five-point Likert-type scales were used to measure the respondents' experiences, views, satisfaction, and evaluation of their cyber-supervision. The Hong Kong Caritas Institute of Higher Education Research and Ethics Committee approved the ethics application HRE210107. The questionnaire was in English and distributed via an advert, which included the Survey Monkey link. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) agreed to distribute the advertisement to national organisations and social media. The respondents gave their informed consent by completing and submitting the questionnaire. The survey was open from April 2021 to September 2021; the responses were slow across the first three months, with only 50 responses. We contacted several national organisations, including the Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work Association, the Australian Association of Social Workers and the British Association of Social Workers, directly and applied for their approval to advertise the survey, which increased the number of responses. The 195 responses were analysed using IBM SPSS

28 (IBM Corp, 2021). Descriptive analysis was undertaken for the demographic background questions. The Likert scale data was non-parametric, and this, together with the small supervisee sample size and differences in samples between supervisees and supervisors, meant that non-parametric analysis was undertaken. This involved percentages and counts for the scales. Bivariate Spearman *Rho* correlations were applied to respondents' views and experiences of online supervision and overall satisfaction and evaluation. Cohen's (1988) guidelines concerning the strength of the relationship were used. Missing data was addressed by leaving the cells blank and reporting the number of respondents throughout the article (Pallant, 2016).

Respondents characteristics

The 189 respondents who identified their region were from four IFSW regions. Two-thirds were from Europe (67.19%, $n = 127$), 29.63% ($n = 56$) from the Asia-Pacific region, 2.65% ($n = 5$) from Africa, and one participant was from North America. Over three-quarters of 194 respondents were female (77.84%, $n = 151$), 21.13% ($n = 41$) were male, and one per cent ($n = 2$) were gender diverse. Over half were aged between 41 and 60 years (55.9%, $n = 109$), just over a quarter were aged 61 years or more (26.15%, $n = 51$), with 17.95% ($n = 35$) being aged between 20 and 40 years. Among 138 respondents who identified the service area that they worked for almost a third (32.61%, $n = 45$) worked for a health service, 15.22% ($n = 21$) were in children's services, another 15.22% ($n = 21$) worked for community services, 14.49% ($n = 20$) worked for a family service, 13.04% ($n = 18$) worked with youth, 7.25% ($n = 10$) were in rehabilitation services, and the remaining 2.17% ($n = 3$) worked for elderly services. Most of the 190 respondents who indicated their role were supervisors (82.63%, $n = 157$), with 17.37% ($n = 33$) being supervisees. Nine respondents answered both the supervisee and supervisor experiences questions and identified their role as supervisors.

Supervisees' and supervisors' experiences and views

The supervisee results are presented and commented on first in the following sections, followed by the supervisors' results.

Current situation

The respondents rated their level of agreement (ranging from strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (NE), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA)) with four statements about their current supervision situation (See Tables 1 and 2). The supervisees' results show that most supervisees' supervision changed during Covid-19 and almost two-thirds enjoyed using the technical tools available for online supervision. The results concerning whether the shift to online was mutually agreed upon indicate that it was perhaps imposed rather than negotiated or discussed for some. The supervisors' results show that most changed their supervision to incorporate digital devices and technology. For most, the shift was done by mutual agreement. The supervisors had mixed feelings about how

much they enjoyed the online tools and the disruption to their usual supervision practice during Covid-19.

Frequency of use

The respondents indicated the frequency (ranging from *never*, *rarely*, *sometimes*, *often* and *always*) of their use of online supervision via different formats during Covid-19 (See Tables 3 and 4). For the supervisees, video-conferencing tools were the most common format, with most using them regularly. A third used chat and messaging tools and email with a degree of regularity. The least common online supervision format was social media sites. Most supervisors frequently used video-conferencing tools. All other online formats were either rarely or never used by a majority of the supervisors. The least used was social media sites, with most supervisors never or rarely using this format in their supervision. These results show that video-conferencing tools were the most common format used during Covid-19 for both the supervisees and supervisors.

Table 1. Supervisees' Current Situation of Supervision

Statement	N	% A + SA	% SD + D + NE
Digital devices and technologies are incorporated into my supervision practice during COVID19	41	85.37	14.63
My usual experience of supervision practice changed greatly during COVID19	41	70.73	29.27
I enjoy using technological tools available to me on online supervision during COVID19	41	65.86	34.14
We mutually agreed to shift to online supervision	41	56.1	43.9

Table 2. Current Situation of the Supervision Provided as a Supervisor

Statement	N	% A + SA	% SD + D + NE
I incorporate digital devices and technologies into my supervision practice during COVID-19	161	90.06	9.94
Both supervisee and supervisor have a mutually agreement to shift to online supervision	160	75.01	24.99
I enjoy using technological tools available to me on online supervision during COVID-19	159	59.12	40.88
My usual supervision practice has been disrupted greatly during COVID-19	160	56.88	43.12

Table 3. Supervisees' Frequency of Use of Online Supervision Format

	N	% Sometimes, Often, and Always	% Never and rarely
Video conferencing tools such as Skype, Zoom, Zoho, Webinar	42	78.57	21.43
Chat and messaging tools such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts	42	33.33	66.67
E-mail such as Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook	42	33.33	66.67
Messaging apps on smartphones such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Signal, Line	42	14.28	85.72
Others	40	17.50	82.50
Internet Chatrooms	41	9.76	90.24
Social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn	42	4.76	95.24

Table 4. Supervisors' Frequency of Use of Online Supervision Format

Statement	N	% Sometimes, Often, and Always	% Never and rarely
Video conferencing tools such as Skype, Zoom, Zoho, Webinar	160	93.14	6.86
E-mail such as Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook	153	43.14	56.86
Chat and messaging tools such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts	156	40.39	59.61
Messaging apps on smartphones such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Signal, Line	153	26.80	73.20
Others	113	22.12	77.88
Internet Chatrooms	145	15.18	84.82
Social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn	152	13.16	86.84

Views about the use of technological tools

The respondents indicated their level of agreement with each of 11 statements concerning their views about using technological tools (See Tables 5 and 6). For the supervisees, the highest levels of agreement were for the statements concerning the importance of confidentiality and privacy, knowing how to use technological tools to participate in online supervision, having a mutually agreed contract and that an online relationship can be kept despite using different tools. The lowest levels of agreement were for participation in online

supervision prior to Covid-19, that it was easy to build a strong working alliance with their supervisor using online tools, that some technological tools affected the boundaries of the supervisory relationship and that there were a wide range of topics during online supervision via different types of technological tools. The majority of the supervisees' views about the use of technological tools were in agreement with the statements and indicated a familiarity with and degree of comfort with using technological tools. For the supervisors, the highest levels of agreement, i.e., greater than two-thirds of the supervisors, were for the protection of confidentiality and data privacy, a mutually agreed contract before

implementation of online supervision, knowing how to use different technological tools to participate in online supervision, that an online supervision relationship can be maintained regardless of the tools used and that a range of tools was suitable for online supervision. There were mixed levels of agreement for the other items,

with the majority agreeing and at least a third of the supervisors disagreeing. Nearly two-thirds disagreed with the statement concerning participation in online supervision through one or more online tools prior to Covid-19. In short, the supervisees and supervisors shared high levels of agreement about most items.

Table 5. *Supervisees' Views Regarding the Use of Technological Tools*

Statement	N	% A + SA	% SD + D + NE
The protection of confidentiality and data privacy are important despite using any type of tool	42	97.62	2.38
I know how to use different technological tools to participate in online supervision	42	90.48	9.52
Both the supervisee and supervisor should have a mutually agreed contract before the implementation of online supervision	42	85.71	14.29
An online relationship can still be kept despite using different types of technological tools	41	87.81	12.19
I am comfortable with using different types of technological tools	42	78.57	21.43
I communicate easily with my supervisor by means of online technological tools	42	71.43	28.57
Online supervision does not interfere with work-life balance	41	70.73	29.27
A wide range of topics during online supervision via different types of technological tools	41	53.66	46.34
Some technological tools affect the boundaries of the supervisory relationship	42	59.52	40.48
It is easy to build a strong working alliance with my supervisor via different types of technological tools	42	54.76	45.24
I have participated in online supervision through one or more technological tools before COVID19	42	50	50

Table 6. *Supervisors' Views Regarding the Use of Technological Tools*

Statement	N	% A + SA	% SD + D + NE
The protection of confidentiality and data privacy are important despite using any type of tool	162	93.21	6.79
Both the supervisee and supervisor should have a mutually agreed contract before the implementation of online supervision	162	91.36	8.64
I know how to use different technological tools to participate in online supervision	160	77.5	22.5
An online supervisory relationship can still be kept despite using different types of technological tools	160	71.26	28.74
I always consider a range of tools that are suitable for online supervision	158	67.09	32.91
I am comfortable with using different types of technological tools	159	62.26	37.74
We discuss a wide range of topics during online supervision via different types of technological tools	158	59.5	40.5
Some technological tools will affect the boundaries of the supervisory relationship	158	56.33	43.67
Online supervision does not interfere with work-life balance	161	50.31	49.69
It is easy to build a strong supervisory working alliance via different types of technological tools	161	54.66	45.34
I have participated in online supervision through one or more technological tools before COVID19	161	36.64	63.36

General views about online supervision

The respondents rated their agreement level with six statements covering general views about online supervision (See Tables 7 and 8). The supervisees' general views acknowledge the strengths of online supervision for supervision at a distance and its value when mixed with face-to-face supervision. The supervisees' views were divided about limiting online supervision as an adjunct to face-to-face and only using it in a lockdown when you cannot meet in person. For most supervisees, online supervision was not their preferred medium, and they disagreed that all supervision should be face-to-face. Over two-thirds of the supervisors agreed that online supervision is the best form of supervision at a distance and is best when mixed with face-to-face in-person supervision.

There were mixed views amongst the supervisors concerning the statement that online supervision should only be used as an adjunct to face-to-face supervision, with a small majority being neutral, disagreeing, and strongly disagreeing. A larger majority held the same neutral or disagreeing views about only using online supervision when we cannot meet in person due to the Covid-19 lockdown. More than three-quarters of the supervisors disagreed or held neutral views about all supervision being face-to-face and in person, whereas most disagreed or held neutral views about the statement that online supervision was their preferred medium for supervision. Both the supervisees' and supervisors' general views of online supervision show that for most, online supervision had a place as a supervision medium alongside face-to-face supervision and was the best form of supervision at a distance.

Table 7. Supervisees' General Views About Online Supervision

Statement	N	% A + SA	% SD + D +NE
Online supervision is the best form for supervision at a distance	41	75.61	24.39
Online supervision is best when mixed with face to face in person supervision	41	73.17	26.83
Online supervision should only be used as an adjunct to face to face supervision	40	52.50	47.50
Online supervision should only be used when you cannot meet in person due to COVID 19 lock down	41	41.46	58.54
Online supervision is my preferred medium for supervision	41	17.08	82.92
All supervision should be face to face and in person	41	17.07	82.93

Table 8. Supervisors' General Views About Online Supervision

Statement	N	% A + SA	% SD + D +NE
Online supervision is the best form for supervision at a distance	160	68.75	31.25
Online supervision is best when mixed with face to face in person supervision	160	69.38	30.62
Online supervision should only be used as an adjunct to face to face supervision	160	48.13	51.87
Online supervision should only be used when you cannot meet in person due to COVID 19 lock down	162	36.42	63.58
All supervision should be face to face and in person	162	20.98	79.02
Online supervision is my preferred medium for supervision	162	10.49	89.51

What was best for supervisees

The supervisees indicated their agreement level with eight statements about what was best about their online supervision. Table 9 shows the statements about the frequency of online supervision and the supervisor's ability to listen and understand had the highest levels of agreement. In contrast, the statements about the supervisor's availability, the user-friendliness of the technology and the online supervision tools used had the lowest levels of agreement.

The majority of the supervisees' views (over two-thirds) agreed that the frequency of supervision, supervisors' listening skills, support, help, and responsiveness were best in their online supervision.

Improvements for supervisees

The supervisees rated their level of agreement for 11 statements concerning how their experience of online supervision could be improved. Table 10 shows that over half of the respondents agreed that a more structured process and training could improve their experience of online supervision. Whereas over a third of respondents agreed that their experience of online supervision could be improved by better privacy and confidentiality settings, better technology, being better prepared, more frequent supervision and training on online supervision. The items with less than one-third of respondents agreeing concerned their supervisors' interactions with them.

Table 9. What is Best About the Supervisees' Online Supervision

Statement	N	% A + SA	% SD + D +NE
The frequency of our online supervision	40	67.50	32.50
My supervisor's ability to listen and understand	41	68.30	31.70
The support from my supervisor	41	65.85	34.15
The help my supervisor provides in regard to my work	41	63.42	36.58
The responsiveness of my supervisor	41	68.29	31.71
The availability of my supervisor	41	63.41	36.59
The user-friendliness of the technology and supervision experience	41	63.41	36.59
The online supervision tools that we use	39	43.59	56.41

Table 10. How the Supervisee's Experience of Online Supervision Could be Improved

Statement	N	% A + SA	% SD + D +NE
By a more structured process in sessions	41	51.22	48.78
By training in online supervision	41	56.10	43.90
By better privacy and confidentiality settings	41	46.34	53.66
By better technology	41	46.34	53.66
By me being better prepared	41	36.59	63.41
By more frequent supervision	41	39.03	60.97
By training on online technology	41	43.91	56.09
By more support from my supervisor	41	31.70	68.30
By my supervisor listening to me better	41	31.71	68.29
By my supervisor being more available	41	24.39	75.61
By my supervisor being better prepared	41	21.95	78.05

Overall satisfaction

The respondents rated their overall satisfaction with their online supervision as, (dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied, and satisfied). Among the supervisees ($n = 41$), 70.73% ($n = 29$) were satisfied or somewhat satisfied, 9.76% ($n = 4$) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 19.52% ($n = 8$) were dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied with their experiences of online supervision. Bivariate two-tailed Spearman *Rho* correlations were applied to analyse the associations between supervisees' views and experiences of online

supervision and their overall satisfaction. Table 11 details the relationships between the respective items and overall satisfaction with online supervision. The items with a strong positive relationship (i.e., $Rho > 0.5$) with the supervisees' overall satisfaction indicated two views. The first was reflective of supervisees being positive about their online supervision regarding ease of use as their preferred medium, enjoying it, and feeling comfortable in their ability to use it. The second concerns the support, constructive relationship, interactional strengths of their supervisors, and frequency of supervision. In contrast, the items with

Table 11. *Supervisee Item Correlations with Overall Satisfaction*

Item	Rho	Sig (2 tailed)	N
It is easy to build a strong working alliance with my supervisor via different types of technological tools	.818	<.001	41
I communicate easily with my supervisor by means of online technological tools	.799	<.001	41
Online supervision is my preferred medium for supervision	.694	<.001	41
I enjoy using technological tools available to me on online supervision during COVID19	.657	<.001	40
I am comfortable with using different types of technological tools	.653	<.001	41
The frequency of our online supervision	.629	<.001	40
Online supervision is the best form for supervision at a distance	.608	<.001	41
Online supervision does not interfere with work-life balance	.588	<.001	40
The userfriendliness of the technology and supervision experience	.582	<.001	41
My supervisor's ability to listen and understand	.568	<.001	41
I know how to use different technological tools to participate in online supervision	.537	<.001	41
The support from my supervisor	.535	<.001	41
The help my supervisor provides in regard to my work	.533	<.001	41
An online relationship can still be kept despite using different types of technological tools	.506	<.001	40
The responsiveness of my supervisor	.488	.001	41
We mutually agreed to shift to online supervision	.476	.002	40
Digital devices and technologies are incorporated into my supervision practice during COVID19	.462	.003	40
The availability of my supervisor	.412	.007	41
A wide range of topics during online supervision via different types of technological tools	.353	.025	40
By better privacy and confidentiality settings	-.315	.045	41
By my supervisor listening to me better	-.388	.012	41
Online supervision should only be used when you cannot meet in person due to COVID 19 lock down	-.562	<.001	41
All supervision should be face to face and in person	-.606	<.001	41

a strong negative relationship (i.e., $Rho > -0.5$) with overall satisfaction indicated supervisees preferring face-to-face personal supervision and online supervision only being used when you cannot meet in person due to a Covid-19 lockdown had lower overall satisfaction with online supervision. The supervisees' attitude towards online supervision, their comfort in using it, and having a positive supervision experience with their supervisors were related to their overall satisfaction. For the supervisors ($n = 162$), 76.54% ($n = 124$) were satisfied or somewhat satisfied, 14.81% ($n = 24$) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 8.64%

($n = 14$) were dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied with their experiences of online supervision. Table 12 details the relationships between the items and overall satisfaction with online supervision. The items with a strong positive relationship with the supervisors' overall satisfaction included views about enjoying using the technological tools and that it was easy to build a strong supervisory working alliance using different types of tools. The items with a moderate positive relationship (i.e., $Rho = 0.3$ to $.49$) were statements that showed supervisors were comfortable and willing to incorporate digital devices and

Table 12. Supervisors' Correlations with Overall Satisfaction

Item	Rho	Sig (2 tailed)	N
I enjoy using technological tools available to me on online supervision during COVID-19	.565	<.001	159
I think that it is easy to build a strong supervisory working alliance via different types of technological tools	.552	<.001	161
I always consider a range of tools that are suitable for online supervision	.496	<.001	158
I am comfortable with using different types of technological tools	.478	<.001	159
Online supervision is my preferred medium for supervision	.463	<.001	162
Online supervision will not interfere with work-life balance	.450	<.001	161
Online supervisory relationship can still be kept despite using different types of technological tools	.447	<.001	160
I know how to use different technological tools to promote and facilitate online supervision	.424	<.001	160
We discuss a wide range of topics during online supervision via different types of technological tools	.416	<.001	158
Both supervisee and supervisor have a mutually agreement to shift to online supervision	.377	<.001	160
Online supervision is the best form for supervision at a distance	.344	<.001	160
I incorporate digital devices and technologies into my supervision practice during COVID-19	.300	<.001	161
Video conferencing tools such as skype, zoom, webinar	.284	<.001	160
I have tried to conduct online supervision through one or more technological tools before COVID-19	.269	<.001	161
My usual supervision practice has been disrupted greatly during COVID-19	-.219	.005	160
Some types of technological tools will affect the boundaries of the supervisory relationship	-.232	.003	158
Online supervision should only be used as an adjunct to face to face supervision	-.313	<.001	160
Online supervision should only be used when you cannot meet in person due to COVID 19 lock down	-.376	<.001	162
All supervision should be face to face and in person	-.438	<.001	162

technologies, preferred online supervision, were able to use it with ease and for whom there was mutual agreement to shift to online supervision. They also viewed online supervision as best for supervision at a distance. In general, these results show that when the supervisors have a positive view about the use of technology and are comfortable with the use of technology and online supervision, they had greater overall satisfaction with online supervision.

In contrast, the items with negative moderate relationships (i.e., $Rho = -0.3$ to -0.49) indicated that, where supervisors had a higher level of agreement in respect of all supervision being face-to-face, only using online supervision when you cannot meet in person, and online supervision being only used as an adjunct to face-to-face supervision, they had a lower overall satisfaction rating for their online supervision. This indicates that supervisors who prefer face-to-face supervision over online supervision have lower overall satisfaction with online supervision. In short, the supervisors' attitude towards online supervision and level of comfort with it is related to their overall satisfaction.

Overall evaluation

The respondents rated their overall evaluation of their supervision (as poor, adequate, good, very good and excellent). For the supervisees ($n = 41$), 75.61% ($n = 31$) evaluated their online supervision as excellent, very good or good, whereas 24.39% ($n = 10$) evaluated it as adequate or poor. Table 13 details, in descending order, the correlations between survey items and the supervisees' overall evaluation of their supervision. These results are like those for overall satisfaction, with strong positive correlations between high overall evaluations with items that were positive about online supervision and positive about their supervision and supervisor.

The strong negative correlations also indicated the supervisees who had high levels of agreement with their supervision being always face-to-face and with online supervision only used when people cannot meet in person due to Covid-19 lockdown would have a lower overall evaluation of online supervision. For the supervisors ($n = 161$), 77.02% ($n = 124$) evaluated their online supervision as excellent, very good or good, whereas 22.98% ($n = 37$) evaluated it as adequate or poor. Table 14 details the relationships between the items with the supervisors' overall evaluation of their online supervision. The items with strong positive relationships were the same as those for overall satisfaction, namely, that enjoying using technological tools available for online supervision during Covid-19 and that it was easy to build strong supervisory working alliances via different types of tools. Likewise, the items with a moderate positive relationship were statements that showed supervisors were comfortable and willing to incorporate digital devices and technologies, preferred online supervision, were able to use it easily, and for whom there was mutual agreement to shift to online supervision. They also viewed online supervision as best for supervision at a distance.

The results also indicate that, when the supervisors have a positive view about the use of technology and are comfortable with the use of technology and online supervision, they have a more positive evaluation of it. The items with negative moderate relationships indicated that where supervisors had a higher level of agreement in respect of all supervision being face-to-face, only using online supervision when you cannot meet in person, and online supervision being only used as an adjunct to face-to-face supervision, they had a lower overall evaluation of their online supervision. This suggests that a preference for face-to-face supervision is related to a lower overall evaluation of online supervision.

Table 13. *Supervisee Item Correlations with Overall Evaluation*

Item	Rho	Sig (2 tailed)	N
I communicate easily with my supervisor by means of online technological tools	.803	<.001	41
It is easy to build a strong working alliance with my supervisor via different types of technological tools	.796	<.001	41
I enjoy using technological tools available to me on online supervision during COVID19	.722	<.001	40
I am comfortable with using different types of technological tools	.697	<.001	41
The frequency of our online supervision	.683	<.001	40
Online supervision is the best form for supervision at a distance	.675	<.001	41
The support from my supervisor	.638	<.001	41
My supervisor's ability to listen and understand	.618	<.001	41
I know how to use different technological tools to participate in online Supervision	.587	<.001	41
The userfriendliness of the technology and supervision experience	.559	<.001	41
The help my supervisor provides in regard to my work	.533	<.001	41
Online supervision is my preferred medium for supervision	.532	<.001	41
The responsiveness of my supervisor	.520	<.001	41
Online supervision does not interfere with work-life balance	.490	.001	40
The availability of my supervisor	.490	.001	41
An online relationship can still be kept despite using different types of technological tools	.471	.002	40
Digital devices and technologies are incorporated into my supervision practice during COVID19	.468	.002	40
We mutually agreed to shift to online supervision	.426	.006	40
Video conferencing tools such as Skype, Zoom, Zoho, Webinar	.347	.026	41
By a more structured process in sessions	-.330	.035	41
By more support from my supervisor	-.344	.028	41
Messaging apps on smartphones such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Signal, Line	-.354	.023	41
Internet Chatrooms	-.369	.019	40
By my supervisor listening to me better	-.401	.009	41
By better privacy and confidentiality settings	-.424	.006	41
Online supervision should only be used when you cannot meet in person due to COVID 19 lock down	-.591	<.001	41
All supervision should be face to face and in person	-.652	<.001	41

Table 14. Supervisors' Correlations with Overall Evaluation

Item	Rho	Sig	N
I enjoy using technological tools available to me on online supervision during COVID-19	.587	<.001	158
I think that it is easy to build a strong supervisory working alliance via different types of technological tools	.550	<.001	160
Online supervision is my preferred medium for supervision	.490	<.001	161
I know how to use different technological tools to promote and facilitate online supervision	.489	<.001	160
We discuss a wide range of topics during online supervision via different types of technological tools	.482	<.001	158
I am comfortable with using different types of technological tools	.480	<.001	159
I always consider a range of tools that are suitable for online supervision	.473	<.001	158
Online supervisory relationship can still be kept despite using different types of technological tools	.441	<.001	160
Both supervisee and supervisor have a mutually agreement to shift to online supervision	.410	<.001	159
I incorporate digital devices and technologies into my supervision practice during COVID-19	.398	<.001	160
Video conferencing tools such as skype, zoom, webinar	.389	<.001	159
Online supervision will not interfere with work-life balance	.375	<.001	161
Online supervision is the best form for supervision at a distance	.344	<.001	160
I have tried to conduct online supervision through one or more technological tools before COVID-19	.231	.003	161
My usual supervision practice has been disrupted greatly during COVID-19	-.162	.041	159
Online supervision should only be used as an adjunct to face to face supervision	-.355	<.001	160
Online supervision should only be used when you cannot meet in person due to COVID 19 lockdown	-.406	<.001	161
All supervision should be face to face and in person	-.454	<.001	161

Discussion

The results show that supervisees' and supervisors' supervision situations changed in response to Covid-19 and video-conferencing was the most frequently used format. The supervisees and supervisors shared similar views about the use of technological tools in supervision, particularly about the protection of privacy and confidentiality, having a mutually agreed contract and the ability to maintain the communication, relational and core aspects of supervision through online supervision. Their general views of online supervision showed that for most, online supervision was a medium they would use alongside

face-to-face supervision, and it was the best medium for supervision at a distance. For the supervisees' what was best about their online supervision was the frequency of it, and their supervisors' competence and responsiveness. This finding aligned with Mo and Chan (2021), who found that supervisees appreciated their online supervisors' relational support and responsiveness the most. For the majority of the supervisees, the most agreed improvements to their online supervision were a more structured process in sessions and training in online supervision. The finding about training in online supervision mirrors that of Selem (2021) concerning how training in electronic supervision could improve

group electronic supervision. The overall satisfaction and evaluation results showed that supervisees with a positive attitude and approach to online supervision and good supervision with a competent supervisor had higher satisfaction levels and a higher overall evaluation. In contrast, those who strongly preferred face-to-face in-person supervision had lower satisfaction and overall evaluation. One implication of this finding is that there is value in supervisors exploring with supervisees their attitudes to online supervision at the beginning of a supervision relationship to understand how online supervision can be used to meet their needs. In Aotearoa New Zealand, this exploration needs to consider how the Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the profession's pou/ values of Rangatiratanga, Manaakitanga, Whanangatanga, Aroha, Kohtahitanga, Mātātoa, and Wairuatanga are embodied and honoured through the online medium (ANZASW, 2019). Turning to supervisors, the results showed that supervisors with a positive attitude about online supervision and the use of technology had a higher level of satisfaction with their online supervision. It is unknown whether this translates into better supervisory practice in the online environment or greater satisfaction of overall evaluation for supervisees. Nonetheless, it highlights the importance of the supervisors' attitude for their overall satisfaction and evaluation in providing online supervision. The survey results align with Connell's (2023) conclusions that online supervision was a positive experience and that the supervision relationship and good connectivity are important. In addition to Connell (2023), who found that some elements of face-to-face in-person supervision were missed, our study found regarding face-to-face and online supervision, that where supervisees and supervisors strongly valued face-to-face supervision, they had lower levels of satisfaction and a less favourable evaluation of online supervision.

The limitations of this study are that the results are not generalisable beyond the respondents. The sample did not represent

all international social work regions because the respondents are predominantly from Europe and Asia-Pacific, with only one North American respondent and none from the Latin America and Caribbean regions. Another limitation is that only the supervisees were asked what was best about their online supervision and how it could be improved. The specific limitation of this is that we have no comparable data for the supervisors about their views on what is best and what can be improved in their online supervision and that the correlational analysis for the supervisor differs from that of the supervisees regarding the items analysed.

Conclusion

This article has established a baseline of the views and experiences of supervisees and supervisors of cyber-supervision internationally during the Covid-19 pandemic. The finding that the attitudes and perspectives of supervisees and supervisors about online supervision were related to their overall satisfaction and evaluation has implications for supervision practice and further research. The practice implication concerns supervisees and supervisors who engage in online supervision, exploring and discussing their attitudes, views and cultural perspectives early in their relationship, particularly if they plan to use this medium regularly or in conjunction with face-to-face supervision. The implications for further research are for studies with larger samples focusing on the influence of supervisees' and supervisors' attitudes and cultural perspectives about online supervision on their experiences and outcomes.

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors have no funding, relationships with companies, individuals or this journal or other declarations of interest to report.

Received: 26 March 2024

Accepted: 6 May 2024

Published: 15 June 2024

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