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The Impacts on Visit Types in Family Medicine Pre- and Post- COVID-19

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Background

- Telemedicine technology has been available for over a decade but has had limited uptake in healthcare until the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Within weeks during the pandemic, LVHN was able to almost entirely function using only telemedicine across a wide variety of specialties, including family medicine.

Methods

- Conducted a literature review of medical journals and public articles related to family medicine and the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Evaluated the journals in depth to collect information on the use of telemedicine in family medicine before, during, and in the recovery stages of COVID-19.
- Collected electronic data from Epic EMR and queried. The data was then analyzed using Microsoft Excel software.
- The data was analyzed for descriptive statistics using Excel features to compare visit types and frequencies for the most common diagnoses.
 - All LVPG family medicine patients were included from 3/11/19-6/30/19 and 3/11/20-6/30/20.
 - Diagnoses included are hypothyroidism, sinusitis, hypertension, back pain, hyperlipidemia, diabetes, cough, upper respiratory infections, anxiety and depression, and routine checkups.

Results

Figure 1. Total Number of Visits per Visit Type from 3/11/20-6/30/20

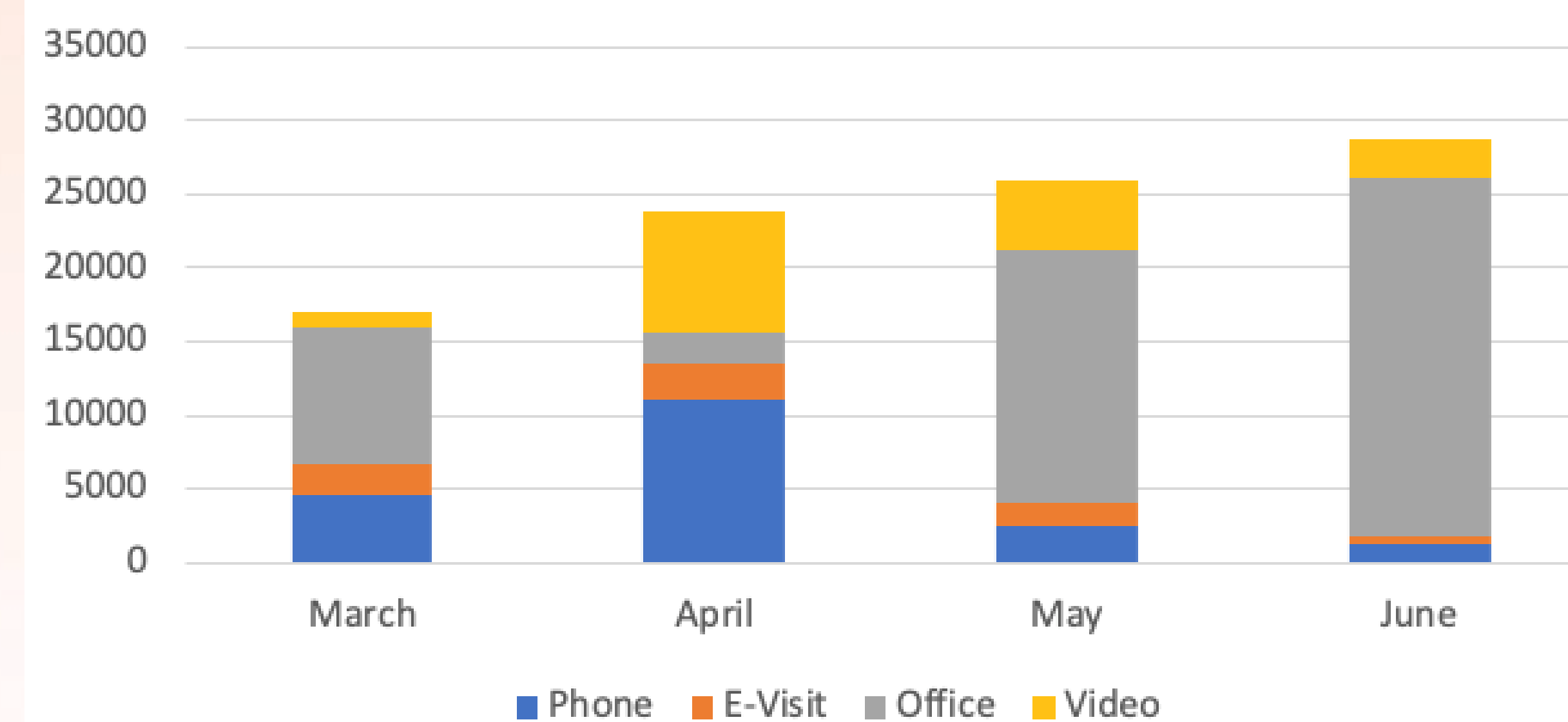


Figure 2. Comparison of Office Visit Diagnoses, March-June 2019 and March-June 2020

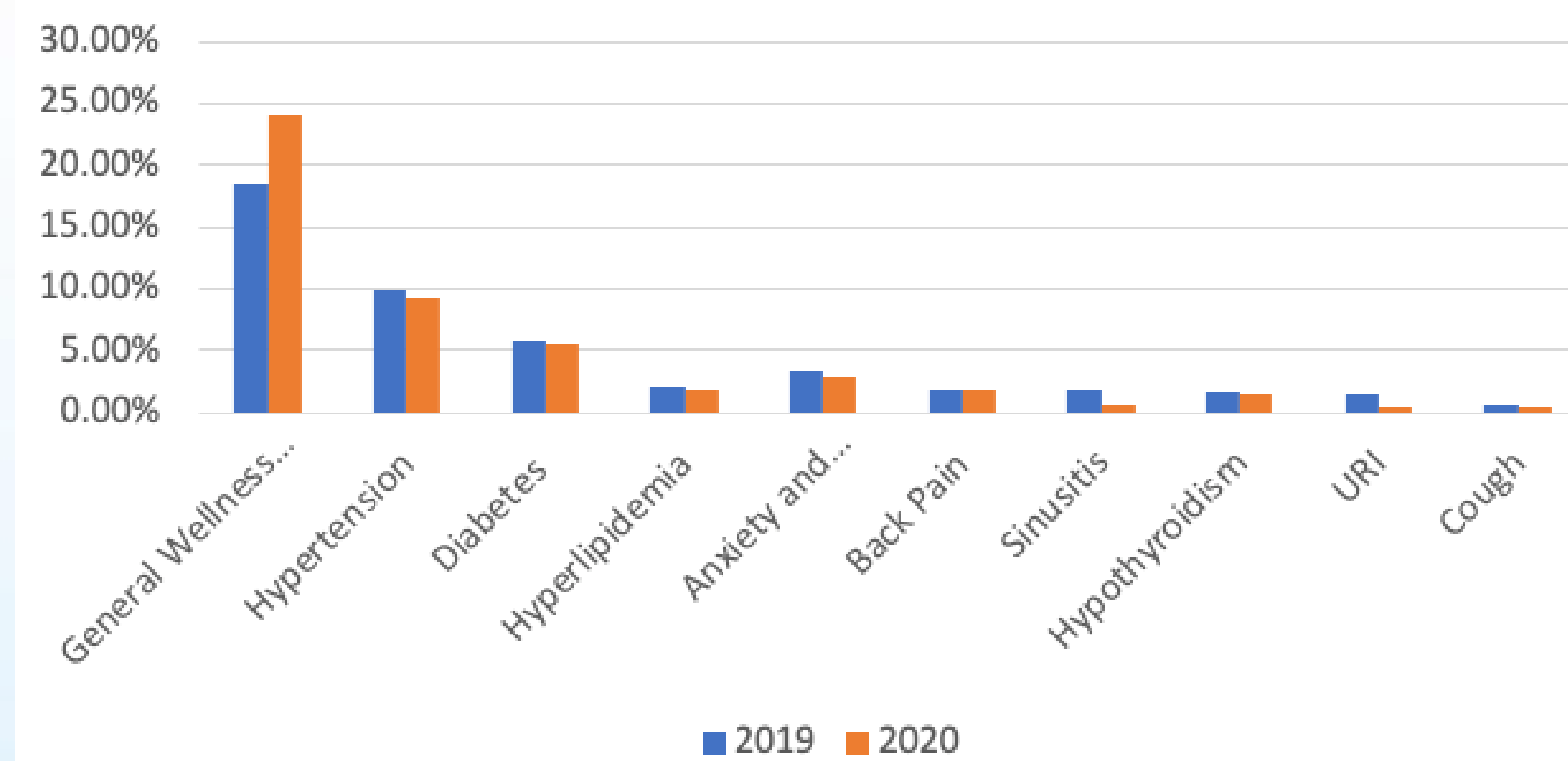
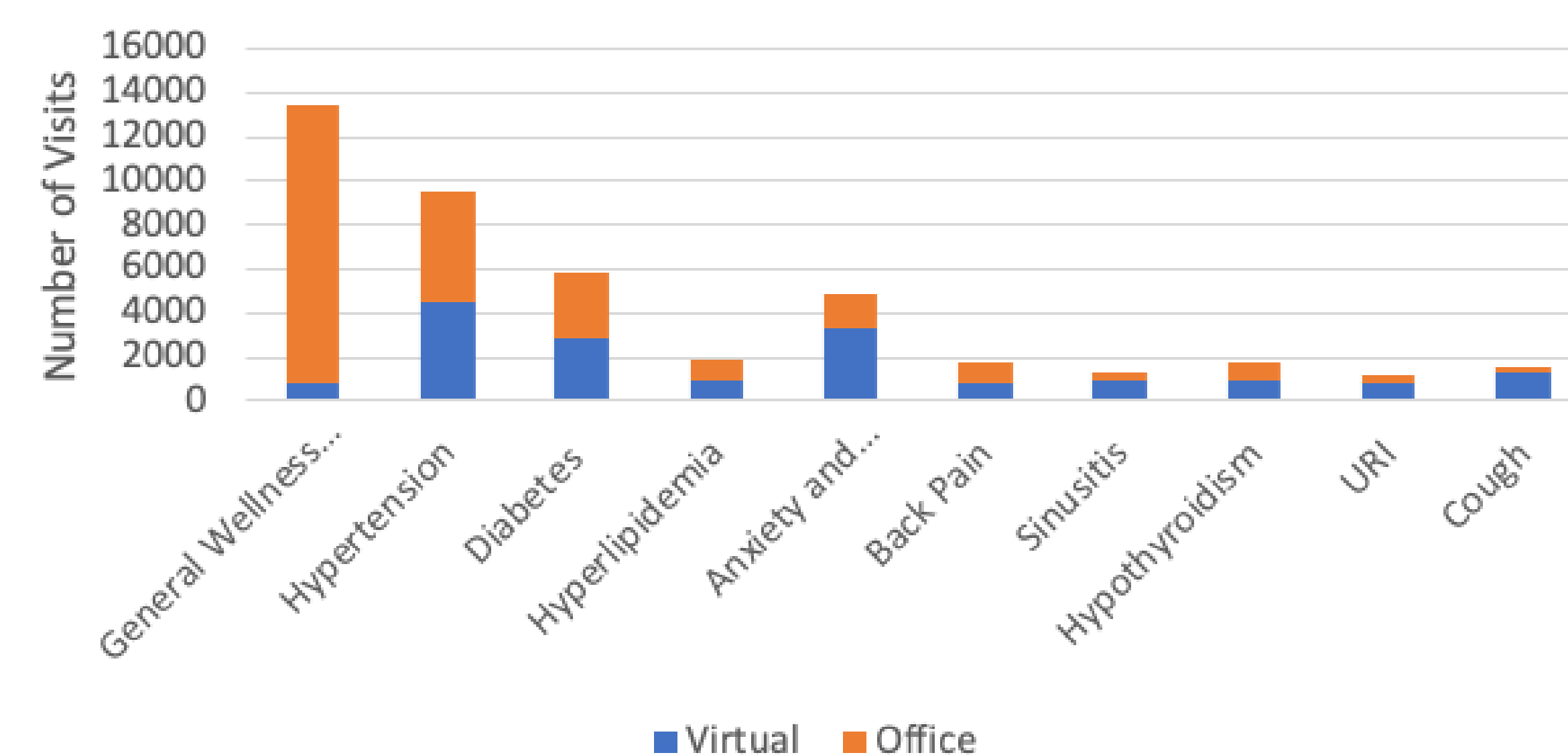


Figure 3. Comparison of All Post- COVID-19 Telemedicine and Office Visits in 2020



Conclusions

- Figure 1 demonstrates the total number of office visits decreased for April but then steadily increased through May and June.
- The only diagnosis that had more office visits in 2020 compared to 2019 was general wellness examinations.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, telemedicine techniques were implemented and used the most during the month of April.
- Telemedicine was used across all of the most common visit types, though was utilized more for chronic illness care than wellness exams.

Future Directions

- Analyze data for all billing codes under each primary diagnosis.
- Ascertain telemedicine trends in other medical specialties including surgical and procedural visits.
- Compare visit type frequencies with demographic variables including age.

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