
Telemedicine: Popularity, Demand and Satisfaction Hits All-Time High



Telehealth usage in the last year has increased by around 6,000%. While the change was due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as healthcare providers and patients shifted to virtual from traditional office visits to reduce infection rates, patients quickly recognised other benefits to telemedicine.

According to the latest research, the market for telehealth services is expected to grow by a further 28% by 2026. Despite pandemics and the increase of chronic health conditions, life expectancy is expected to increase globally. With upwards of 25% of people in Europe and North America over the age of 65 by 2050, the demand on healthcare systems will also increase exponentially.

The need for a well organised telemedicine system has been called for by some for a long time, due to its clear cost-effective nature. Out of 27 million annual visits to US hospitals, it is estimated that nearly two-thirds of the patients can be treated at home.

Post-pandemic Telehealth

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought artificial intelligence into the limelight across the healthcare sectors. Most people considered remote medicine to be more hype than reality, but the pandemic demanded it to be necessary.

Telemedicine can provide accurate and quick healthcare recommendations that were earlier requested from a physician. This can be of significant importance especially during pandemic times to eliminate the spread of diseases in waiting rooms. Another research shows that only 11% of the Americans were using telemedicine in the pre-covid times but now post-covid, nearly 76% of them prefer using it. This is due to awareness among the people concerning the rapid spreading of diseases.

"It doesn't look like telehealth is going away anytime soon," Stuart Long, CEO of InfoBionic, a digital health company, says, "But we've got to be careful that we address the telehealth challenges we still face so physicians can continue to provide expert-level care to patients virtually."

Even though telehealth technologies clearly benefit all members of the healthcare system, there are still significant challenges that must be addressed for this care model to truly succeed long term.

6 Challenges to Effective Telehealth:

1. There are still large variations in legal and regulatory rules, regulations, and guidelines for practice.
2. Currently, a lack of multistate telehealth licensure means that physicians cannot provide medical services across certain geographic barriers.
3. Providers cannot perform comprehensive physician examinations via telehealth, making in-person office visits necessary. Remote patient monitoring devices can offer physicians information on the patient's vital signs, but there is no comprehensive device nor one that goes substantially beyond blood pressure, temperature, oxygen levels, glucose levels, cardiac rhythm, and pulse.
4. Technical difficulties may make using telehealth especially difficult for certain patients, such as the elderly.
5. Greater privacy and security risks may turn some patients away from these technologies.
6. The accuracy of data transmission may be compromised depending on factors such as Internet bandwidth.

The goal of any health tech is to improve access and quality in reaching the patients better. Telemedicine is capable of analysing people of all ages effectively in a cost-effective manner. Remote patient monitoring and alleviating the pressure on healthcare providers with increasing

demand for healthcare systems are other important benefits to ensure telehealth is here to stay.

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