

New Study Shows Telemedicine Has Clear Benefits for Patients



Telemedicine was the most cost-effective and safest solution to offering accessible and high-quality care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Authors working on a new study by WHO/Europe and the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, provided a general review of the status of telemedicine in Europe and Central Asia. They looked at data from over 20,000 studies, covering over 20,000 enrolled patients across 53 countries in the Region.

The study revealed several barriers related to users, technology and infrastructure. Some of the barriers surrounding digital issues included poor internet connection, lack of knowledge in technology and insufficient training. Other barriers concerned resistance from health workers and heavy workloads. Additionally, patients showed some resistance based on their preference for personal contact with health professionals.

Despite the barriers, follow-up by health professionals and clinical outcomes improved - a clear and significant benefit for patients.

Based on the positive results reflecting the success and effectiveness of telemedicine, policy-makers should consider promoting widespread implementation. However, the barriers must be recognised and addressed so that telemedicine can be made more inclusive and accessible. Additionally, the barriers affecting poorer nations should be addressed so that they can also be included to benefit from digital health tools.

WHO/Europe and the European Commission recently set in motion initiatives to support the development and implementation of telemedicine, notably the Regional Digital Health Action Plan for 2023–2030.

The plan commits to ensuring that digital health solutions, including telemedicine, can come to deliver health services in times of emergencies, contribute to ensuring universal health coverage is achieved, and enhance the health and well-being of the public.

The initiative serves to harness the power of telemedicine to overcome geographic barriers, and expand access to care and interventions.

Source: [WHO News](#)

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