

Background

Advanced health information technology in providing health care to patients has become an integral part of practicing medicine. Telemedicine has shown to be especially useful in underserved communities where there is a shortage or absence of adequate clinical care, such as in remote areas. Still, with the pandemic Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the telemedicine and virtual care of patients was effectively and extensively adapted by the tertiary care hospitals in Riyadh. This study aimed to evaluate the standards and requirements of Saudi Arabia's telemedicine practice ethics and the client's satisfaction.

Aim

This study aimed to evaluate the standards and requirements of Saudi Arabia's telemedicine practice ethics and the client's satisfaction.

Methods

This is a cross-sectional, questionnaire-based survey conducted in outpatients department in tertiary care hospitals in Riyadh during the COVID-19 lockdown. We included 393 patients age ≥ 18 years who were called through the virtual clinic. Data were collected between March 2020 and August 2020.

Results

MS Excel was used, three groups were classed by age (18-34 years; 35-44 years; 55 and older years), and the questionnaires were classified into three-partparts. The first was customer satisfaction regarding the telemedicine experience, and it showed 69%. The second was related to ethical considerations, and it showed 65%. The last was the telehealth patients' rating, and it showed 61%.

Table 2. Frequency distribution table for patient satisfaction on telemedicine.

Groups	Frequency	Percentage
Group 1		
0 (No)	10	3
1 (Yes definitely agreed)	111	28
2 (Yes somewhat agreed)	24	6
Group 2		
0 (No)	25	6
1 (Yes definitely agreed)	127	32
2 (Yes somewhat agreed)	42	11
Group 3		
0 (No)	8	2
1 (Yes definitely agreed)	34	9
2 (Yes somewhat agreed)	12	3
Grand Total	393	

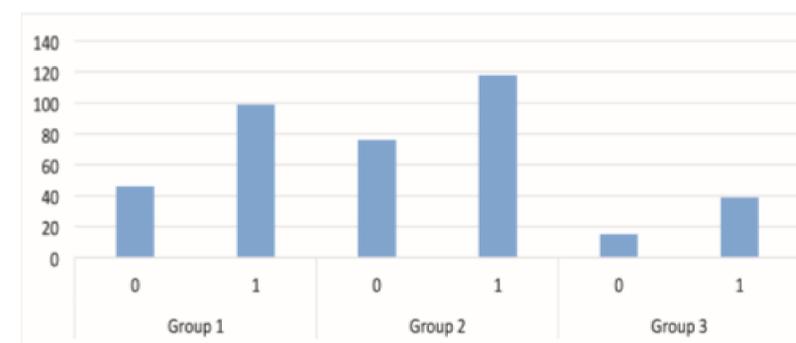


Figure 2. Representation of frequency distribution of patient's ethical satisfaction.

Conclusion

The telemedicine programs facilitated by phone consultations were implemented, and initial findings suggest that patients have very well accepted the health care delivery, model. Our research findings have supported the use of virtual visits as a viable alternative to traditional in-person visits.

Translational Potential

The Virtual Clinics Service enables patients to get medical care though many application to facilitating their access to integrated health services remotely. Some of the key benefits to virtual clinics for OPD are: Improved patient satisfaction, Reduced face to face contact reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19, Reduction in OPD waiting times in some specialties.

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