

National Conference and Exhibition on Rural Innovations

TELEMEDICINE IN RURAL INDIA

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Abstract:

In rural communities, there are gaps in describing the design and effectiveness of technology interventions for treating diseases and addressing determinants of health. The aim of this study is to evaluate literature on current applications, therapeutic areas, and outcomes of telehealth interventions in rural communities in India. Among 15 included studies, 9 studies analysed telehealth interventions in patients, 3 in health care professionals, and 3 in both patients and health care professionals. The included studies reported positive outcomes and experiences of telehealth use in rural populations including acceptability and increased satisfaction; they also noted that technology is convenient and efficient. Other notable benefits included decreased direct and indirect costs to the patient (travel cost and time) and health care service provider (staffing). Telehealth models were associated with positive outcomes for patients and health care professionals, suggesting these models are feasible and can be effective. Future telehealth interventions and studies examining these programs are lower onsite health care resource utilization, improved physician recruitment and retention, improved access to care, and increased education and training of patients and health care professionals. Warranted, especially in rural communities, and future research should evaluate the impact of increased telehealth use as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords---Telehealth, Telemedicine, Rural Health, Health Outcomes, Social Determinants of Health, E-health, Healthcare Accessibility.



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