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The use of telemedicine in surgical care: A systematic review

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Background & Aim: Telemedicine describes a healthcare service where physicians communicate with patients remotely using telecommunication technologies. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) defines telemedicine as the use of electronic information and communications technologies to provide and support health care when distance separates participants. It has been used to provide pre-/postoperative surgical consultation and monitoring, as well as surgical teleconferencing and education across borders. The aim of this systematic review is to provide a broad perspective on telemedicine use in surgical care.

Method: A literature search was carried out through March 2018. The search terms included: cell phones, telemedicine, telecommunications, video, online or on-line, videoconferencing, remote consultation, surgery, preoperative, perioperative, perioperative care, postoperative, postoperative and surgical procedures, operative, monitor. Studies were included if they used telemedicine in surgery for pre-, peri- or post-surgery periods and if they compared usual care with telemedicine. However, the exclusion criteria reviews, case series, case reports and conference abstracts.

Result: A total of 24 studies were included. All reported the effectiveness of telemedicine in surgical care. Most studies that described patient satisfaction included reference to money saved. Most of patients' comments were about avoiding unnecessary trips to hospitals, saving time and reducing the number of working days missed.

Conclusion: Studies reported that telemedicine in surgical care is safe and effective, it can improve access to the healthcare system and provide significant time savings to both patients and healthcare providers.

Biography

Abdulmajid Asiri has completed his education from King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He is a Medical Student Intern in King Abdulaziz Medical City, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

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