

Kristyn Watkins

Telehealth Discussion

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COVID-19 changed many of the things we had been accustomed to. Specifically, Covid-19 made telehealth grow in popularity, making it a major part of the healthcare systems. A national study involving 36 million working-age individuals found that telemedicine encounters increased by 766% in the first three months of the pandemic (Shaver, 2022). During the pandemic, telehealth allowed patients to seek medical care from home and avoid exposing themselves or others by going into the hospital. The services provided through telehealth and telemedicine were expanded (Shaver, 2022). The increased use of telehealth technology can be viewed both ways, but I feel it will be viewed as promoting contact for consumers geographically isolated more. For some individuals, it can be viewed as dehumanizing due to the lack of face-to-face care and assessments, but it has proven to be extremely beneficial for individuals geographically isolated and seeking care. Patients in rural areas use telehealth a lot due to their distance from hospitals/medical establishments.

Privacy and security, technology issues, and insurance reimbursements are all resistance issues that might be met. With the expanded use of telehealth, data breaches and access to patient information are more likely to occur. This issue can be overcome by using two-factor authentication and a strong password to protect data. Insurance reimbursement is an issue with telehealth because some insurance companies will not reimburse telehealth visits as they do with face-to-face visits. This issue can be met by speaking with the insurance company and

determining what can be reimbursed. Lastly, with the use of technology, there are always risks for issues such as loss of internet, lack of equipment, or trouble with understanding systems. These issues can be overcome by familiarizing oneself with devices through patient education tutorials and having healthcare systems provide devices for patients to use if they do not own one.

References

Shaver J. (2022). The State of Telehealth Before and After the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Primary care*, 49(4), 517–530. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pop.2022.04.002>