

Telemedicine

Telegeriatrics during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Background: Ain Shams University Virtual Hospital (AVH) has been offering telemedicine services since 2016. During the COVID-19 pandemic it has become essential to offer healthcare services in a safe way. Telemedicine was the perfect choice worldwide to compensate for the deficiency of physical healthcare services. Limitations especially in the elderly population questioned the feasibility of the telegeriatrics model.

Aim: To study the feasibility and acceptability of the AVH telemedicine model in geriatric patients.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study performed from April to October 2020 recruiting patients above 60 years receiving

telemedicine services as part of the telemedicine program delivered via AVH. Data was collected via Google forms that were sent to the patients and physicians via Whats app.

Results: 1471 patients were triaged via the Whats app managed by geriatric consultants and 64 received video consultations. 849 patients responded to the surveys from all age groups of which 21.8% were above 60 years. From the responders 19.7% consulted geriatric medicine while the 2.1% consulted other specialties. Most satisfaction domains were 85% and above positive responses with an insignificant difference between age groups. 90% of physicians felt confident in their medical management using telemedicine. Conclusion: telegeriatrics is feasible as it is well accepted, easily used and preferred over clinic visits during the COVID-19 pandemic and after, by patients. Physicians are confident in their management using it.

Key words: Ain Shams University Virtual Hospital, Telemedicine, Telegeriatrics, COVID-19