

29<sup>th</sup> International Conference on  
**Nursing Education and Research**

&

14<sup>th</sup> International Conference on  
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### **Consumers response to Telemedicine as a Healthcare delivery model in UAE**

Telemedicine utilizes the superior edge of Information Communication Technology to overcome geographical hurdles, and extend the access to health care services. World Health Organization (2010) distinguishes telemedicine from telehealth with the former restricted to service delivery by physicians only, and the latter signifying services provided by health professionals in general, including nurses, pharmacists, and others. However, for the purpose of this study, telemedicine and telehealth are synonymous and used interchangeably. WHO (2010) defined Telemedicine as “the delivery of healthcare services, where distance is a critical factor, by all health-care professionals using information and communication technologies for the exchange of valid information for diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease and injuries, research and evaluation, and for the continuing education of health-care providers, all in the interests of advancing the health of individuals and their communities”.

“Telehealth / Telemedicine” refers to the use of e-services to support a board range of remote services like patient care, education and monitoring. Telehealth, if integrated into ambulatory and hospital-based care, can achieve its full potential to address the six domains of quality care as specified by the Institute of Medicine report; safe, effective, patient centered, timely, efficient and equitable care to all. Telehealth is a disruptive technology that appears to threaten traditional healthcare delivery system but has the potential to reform and transform the industry by reducing cost, increasing quality and patient satisfaction. Technological innovations have been the impetus for the development of telemedicine. It started as a way to provide medical services to patients living in the rural areas. It allows physicians that are off-site to have a platform to see patients at remote locations and

provide patient access to specialty services and to quality of care that would not be available otherwise.

There are both benefits and disadvantages to the care that is provided through telemedicine. The benefits of telemedicine include providing access to specialty care services with efficient use of medical resources, as a way to reach patients living outside a hospital’s normal service area. However, implementation of telemedicine services requires a number of new protocols and safety measures designed to protect the privacy and confidentiality of patients, as well as to ensure physicians are having and maintaining appropriate licensure, and providing adequate training to the end users on use of technology. The arrays of telemedicine services range from teleconsultation to tele surgery. Telecommunication technologies have made treatment options available to out of reach patients by reducing the traveling expenses and enhancing patient experience. The aim of this study is to understand how consumers view the value proposition of telemedicine as a healthcare delivery model in United Arab Emirates. The objective of this study is to explore the consumers view on telemedicine as a healthcare delivery model in the component of convenience, willingness to use, improved delivery of healthcare, understand the quality of virtual medical care and probably advocate the use of telehealth as preferred method of seeking medical attention.

In this study, data was collected using a questionnaire developed through google forms, and sent out to respondents through email and WhatsApp. There were no specific exclusion criteria and inclusion criteria included all UAE nationals above 18 years of age. The total responses collected were 214.

In summary, majority of the respondents are willing to use

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telehealth services for routine care mainly. The respondents also agree that telemedicine will save time and minimize the need for travel, and thereby revamp the access to healthcare. The respondents also believe that telemedicine will save money and provide equivalent experience of consultation as in-person visits. The respondents also aspire that the telehealth services to be covered by insurance for unanimous approval and acceptance of telehealth services in the future by the community.

### Speaker Biography

Kavita Bhalekar, RN, PhD (N), MBA in Healthcare Management from Geneva business school. Currently working as the Nursing Director - Abu

Dhabi Cluster at NMC specialty hospital, UAE. Area of interest include Clinical care, Healthcare Informatics, Quality and Accreditations, Clinical Research. She has successfully Standardized Nursing competencies, Implemented of Nursing Dashboard and Established Nursing KPI's for the entire group of NMC healthcare. Throughout her career, she has actively participated in the steering committees, work groups and task forces of NMC healthcare. She has been an active team member in NMC's accreditation processes for JCI, HAAD, SKEA, DQA, ISO. She spearheaded for "Dr. C R Shetty Centre for simulation and interactive learning and development". She has Commissioned First Aid clinics, school health clinics and Medical Center's in UAE. She has published articles in reputed nursing journals and currently serves as the International Editor for Journal of Critical Care Nursing Society of INDIA.

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