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Potential Clinical Benefits of Tele-pharmacy

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Tele-pharmacy (defined as "a way of delivering pharmaceutical products, including care, by the means of telecommunication to different patients") paves the way for patients to receive their medicines and pharmaceutical care in their comfort zone. In terms of advantages of tele-pharmacy, this mechanism allows pharmacists to contribute clinical expertise to clinics and patients, while alleviating the strain on healthcare resources. The objective of this paper is to present discussion on potential clinical benefits of tele-pharmacy in the context of health delivery system. The author has used Secondary data (largely 'qualitative'), and method of data analysis is descriptive. Analysis of data in this work indicates that tele-pharmacy delivers a multitude of advantages to both the patient and the pharmacy. Potential clinical benefits include:

- a) **Reduced Operating Costs:** Tele-pharmacy offers 24/7 pharmacy services at reduced costs to those who are remotely located. Such people face the challenge of affordably providing around-the-clock medication and safety practices. The author of this review paper argues that tele-pharmacy can generate significant savings to the hospital pharmacy by delivering pharmacy consultations and medication guidance remotely.
- b) **Increased Operational Efficiency:** Since tele-pharmacy services operate (without a break) as an extension of the pharmacy team, it can significantly reduce after-hours drug approval times. This mechanism decreases the amount of medication errors during the time that pharmacists are on call or understaffed.
- c) **Enhanced Clinical Role for Pharmacists:** As tele-pharmacy provides around-the-clock prescription medicines, pharmacists can concentrate more on patient needs. This, in turn, allows pharmacists to contribute enhanced time for (1) improving patient care services; (2) strengthening clinical quality, and (3) improving patient satisfaction.
- d) **Improved Patient Adherence:** In situations wherein patients have transitioned home from a hospital stay, tele-pharmacy provides (pharmacist-led) medication reconciliation, resulting in better health outcomes. It helps patients in medication counselling at discharge, post-discharge follow-up.

Biography

Santhosh Kumar is an Independent Researcher (Scholar) retired (on June 30, 2020), as Technical Assistant, from Population Education Resource Centre, Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension, S.N.D.T. Women's University, Mumbai, India. He underwent training in demography, with award of Government of India Fellowship, during 1986-1987 from the IIPS, Mumbai. Also, he acquired Ph. D. from University of Patna in 1999. His other qualifications include Post-Master's Diploma in Adult & Continuing Education, Certificate Course on Hospital and Health Care Management, and Diploma in Human Resource Development. He has authored (some co-authored) 5 booklets, 4 books, 23 book chapters, 97 journal articles, 2 monographs, 7 research studies, & 56 papers for national & international conferences (some with bursary). He has been awarded with certificate of excellence in reviewing for 2017, 2018, 2021 & 2022. He has been conferred with excellence of research award for outstanding contribution & recognition in the field of agriculture in 2021.