

Some determinants of distant consultation of health problems

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Introduction

The usual way of communicating health problems is by face to face consultation with the doctor, but sometimes the health problems are also communicated through distant Medias like newspapers, magazines or Internet with experts. New technologies can help to ease some of the time pressures on doctors. Innovations such as online and video consultations, image sharing and apps are being used by an increasing number of doctors to carry out remote consultations with patients. As remote consultations move more into the mainstream, it is clear that there are many advantages to both patients and doctors. However, it is important to be aware of the medico-legal risks and the circumstances when only a face-to-face consultation will do.¹ Such consultations offer potential advantages to patients and the healthcare system, but fears have been expressed that they may be clinically risky and/or less acceptable to patients or staff, and they bring significant technical, logistical and regulatory challenges.²

A retrospective study was conducted to know the some determinants of distant consultation of health problems. 1000 health related questions asked in a popular weekly health magazine were selected randomly from 200 different issues and these questions were analyzed carefully. The majority of health problems were pertaining to the 21-40 years of age-group (32%), followed by age-group of less than 20 years (16%) of which almost 10 % were pertaining to pediatric age-group. 8% of the problems were about geriatric age-group. Most questions related to health problems were sent by the females (63%); these were either related to their own health or to their children or husband. Most of questions sent by males were pertaining to their own health. Most of the questions analyzed were usually given as complaints in the words of the person asking it. The majority of the questions were pertaining to long standing, chronic health problems (72%). Majority of the questions were related to Obstetrics and Gynecology (27%), which may due to some embarrassment issues related to these health problems. General medical problems related questions were 23%, followed by skin problems related questions (18%). The pediatrics health related questions (10%) were asked

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by mothers. Other questions were related to Orthopedics (7%), Ophthalmology (7%), Otolaryngology (4%), and mental health (4%). Few questions also mentioned specific medical diagnoses like diabetes mellitus, hypertension or rheumatoid arthritis.

To conclude, almost all type of health related problems are communicated for distant consultation. Precisely, distant consultation of health problems is done mainly for chronic ailments, by the females may be due to some embarrassment issues related problems which come across during face to face consultation. Such consultation is used by all age-groups, but primarily by adults. Females usually communicate health problems not also pertaining to themselves but also to the family members especially children.

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Conflicts of interest

Author declares that there is no conflicts of interest.

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