

Research Assessment #10

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Subject: Telemedicine

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One aspect of healthcare that has drastically changed is the increasing influence of technology throughout the field in its entirety. In Ellie's office, the appearance of technology is obvious in her job description. With handling scorecards and data analysis for the entire Baylor Scott & White system, the field of healthcare administration and quality analysis now relies almost entirely on technology. The growth of the modern world has also manifested itself in the actual in-person patient-doctor interactions that have been around since the beginning of healthcare. Now with numerous startups launching telemedicine platforms, many millennials are taking advantage of the immediate and convenient access that virtual medical care allows.

The development of telemedicine is still very new to developing countries so there are many unanswered questions and scenarios that have yet to have protocols. A large sector of the virtual medical assistance stems from issues dealing with STDs and STIs along with birth control. Companies are prescribing birth control, UTI prescription, daily HIV prevention medicine, and other services through online chats and video calls. Many millennials do not have a primary care physician - nor do they feel they need one - so there is no barrier to having a trusting relationship with a physician before receiving care. In fact, many young adults prefer the anonymity that telemedicine provides them, stripping them of any insecurities or embarrassment that they might feel when visiting a physician in person.

Another aspect of telemedicine that wasn't mentioned in the article, but that I think would be useful, would be the implementation of telemedicine centers in developing areas and third world countries. Many areas that are in dire need of an on-site or available physician could benefit greatly from this easy access. Many cases of illness that a short virtual check-up could cure or stop from worsening could drastically help the state of health in many countries like Peru, where the Salvando Corazones medical mission is taking place.

However, I am not sure that the quality of healthcare would remain as sophisticated when the services are able to conveniently. Additionally, where are the funds coming from? How much does a virtual visit cost and would the patient have to pay double if they receive a virtual interaction with a physician that then consults them to visit somebody in person? How do they measure quality for an online healthcare system and how do they ensure that physicians are able to give accurate care when the patient is not tangible? Does the patient's medical chart transfer between physicians

only within one company or can it be shared amongst telemedicine firms? There are so many questions that still remain unanswered in regards to this field because it is still very new - it only just started to take off in 2015. Millennials in developed countries are essentially the guinea pigs to this operation but hopefully, within a few years, people in developing regions can be included in on this phenomenon that is projected to completely alter the healthcare landscape alongside changing millions of people's lives.