

Stepaniuk A., Krawiel M., Pawlukianiec C.

SURVEY STUDY ON PATIENTS AND DOCTORS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF TELEDERMATOLOGY AND TELECARE IN POLAND

Scientific supervisors: Professor Baran A., MD, PhD, Professor Flisiak I., MD, PhD

Department of Dermatology and Venereology

Medical University of Bialystok, Bialystok

Introduction. Telemedicine is the provision of health services over a spatial distance through the use of telecommunication technology with the aim of benefiting the patient or population.

During the pandemic health care systems worldwide rapidly implemented telemedicine solutions in order to avoid spreading the coronavirus among doctors and patients.

Aim of the study: to analyse the knowledge, usage and attitude towards telemedicine among patients, dermatologists and other doctors in Poland.

Material and methods. In 2020 an original anonymous online survey was carried among 121 patients, 63 dermatologists and 50 doctors of other specialties. They filled general and specific questions regarding telemedicine. Statistical analysis was performed using Chi-Square test, statistically significant difference was at $p < 0.05$.

Results and discussion. In the patients group 58.7% suffered from a skin disease and more than half have been diagnosed with at least one disease other than dermatological. 79.3% have used telemedicine during the pandemic. 61% declared that problems that have been discussed during the teleconsultations could not have been solved using telemedicine and the most frequently reported reason was the lack of ability to perform additional screenings (58.5%). However, 54.5% of our respondents viewed teleconsultations unfavourably. Furthermore, 96.6% of the dermatologists admitted that they had to schedule a visit at the office or ask for additional pictures and 90% of them agreed that telemedicine cannot replace traditional visits. There was a statistical significance between dermatologists and other specialties doctors regarding telemedicine's ability to replace in office visits, use in treatment of elderly patients and duration of the teleconsultation compared to a traditional visit (all $p < 0.05$).

Conclusions. Telemedicine is a useful tool for communicating with the patients but it needs to be evaluated in the context of potential limitations. It is worth mentioning that teleconsultations can delay proper diagnosis and treatment when the clinical picture requires further assessment which may lead to irreversible changes and have a potential deadly effect.