THE EFFICACY OF TELENURSING IN ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF PATIENT CARE

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ABSTRACT

Telenursing, enabled by advancements in communication technology, is revolutionizing healthcare delivery, particularly in underserved regions. It provides benefits such as cost efficiency, reduced healthcare pressure, and improved patient care through remote monitoring and education. Although challenges like adapting to new technology and ensuring data confidentiality exist, telenursing improves communication and efficiency compared to traditional methods. In India, projects like ISRO's satellite connections and telemedicine training demonstrate its potential to bridge healthcare gaps. With the right training and technology integration, telenursing can become a long-term solution in areas with limited resources.

Keywords: Telenursing, Quality, Patient care.

INTRODUCTION

Telenursing has become a reality as a result of the rapid development of information and communication technology. With the introduction of telenursing, new changes are anticipated in the fundamental nursing domains of "person," "environment," "nursing," and "health"[1]. Tele-nursing utilizes telecommunication and information technology to deliver nursing care over long distances. Since nurses and patients are physically separated, building a therapeutic relationship can be challenging, requiring nurses to enhance their communication and technological skills [4]. The American Nurses Association defines telenursing as a subset of telehealth focused on nursing practice. It improves healthcare access for underserved populations, including rural and low-income individuals, by offering services like diabetic counseling, diet guidance, healthy living advice, post-operative follow-ups, and other nursing-related care [5].

BENEFICIAL ASPECTS

General Benefits

Benefits of tele-nursing for the health system, particularly in terms of cost and resource savings. It could help alleviate the burden on care providers, address waiting lists, and reduce nursing schedule saturation. The growth of tele-nursing is anticipated to be driven by the need to ease an overcrowded healthcare system, with long-term profitability seen as a key factor in its implementation. Tele-nursing is also a valuable tool for providing health advice to young people, and it may help reduce hospital admissions, benefiting both the healthcare system and patients. Additionally, good communication through tele-nursing could lead to reduced morbidity and mortality, avoiding unnecessary transfers and hospital stays[2].

Health Benefits

Tele-nursing offers several benefits to the healthcare system, including cost and resource savings, reduced care burden, and alleviation of waiting lists and nursing schedule saturation. Its growth is expected to address system overcrowding and become more profitable over time. Additionally, tele-nursing can provide health advice to young people, reduce hospital admissions, and improve patient outcomes by enhancing communication, thereby decreasing morbidity, mortality, and unnecessary transfers[2].

Other Benefits

Tele-nursing offers immediate and constant access to information and support, enabling proactive monitoring and early intervention to prevent crises for patients and families. It provides education to patients, caregivers, and families, helping with early symptom recognition and reducing unnecessary physician visits and hospital emergency visits. Tele-nursing also lowers inpatient admissions,

delaytransfers to extended care facilities and is used by managed care organizations for case management, triage, and counseling [4].

Tele-nursing is effective in managing behavioral health conditions and improving self-esteem and self-confidence for patients, families, and caregivers. It facilitates self-management of medical conditions and supports continuous communication, particularly for patients with chronic or debilitating illnesses. By overcoming time, distance, and resource limitations, tele-nursing allows health services to reach a broader population, promotes patient and family involvement in care, and can reduce hospital stays. Nurses using tele-nursing technologies assess, plan, intervene, and evaluate care remotely through digital tools and tele-monitoring equipment [4].

TELENURSING IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

The studies revealed a broad range of health needs, including both acute and chronic issues, with various contributions of tele-nursing in Primary Health Care (PHC), tele-nursing is viewed as a promising strategy for improving PHC care, fostering interprofessional collaboration. [3]

Tele-nursing empowers patients and families to actively participate in care, in managing acute and chronic illnesses. Patients can contact on-call nurses for video consultations, addressing concerns such as changing dressings or monitoring vital signs like blood pressure and weight via the Internet or phone. This service enables nurses to provide timely, accurate information and support, enhancing continuity of care through frequent interactions. It helps reduce reliance on costly healthcare services like physician visits, emergency units, and hospitals, and can shorten hospital stays. Tele-nursing benefits adults with chronic conditions who require regular monitoring but cannot afford home care, ultimately reducing healthcare costs and improving resource utilization [4].Thus, telenursing helps by providing effective primary needs-based care and facilities to the patients which help to improve the quality of patient's overall health.

CHALLENGES IN TELENURSING PRACTICE

Healthcare providers are concerned that using e-care and e-monitoring through telehealth and telenursing may weaken personal relationships with patients and limit hands-on care. They also find adapting to new technology and reviewing data time-consuming. Patients worry about the confidentiality of their information. Despite these concerns, telenursing improves communication, reduces missed information, and is more time-efficient than traditional visits[4].

EXPLORING TELENURSING IN INDIA: PRESENT REALITIES AND FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

Nurses are essential to healthcare systems, and remote care training is vital, especially in areas like urban India where nurse shortages are common. Telenurses must possess excellent communication, tech skills, quick thinking, and technical expertise. Training is facilitated through videoconferencing and other technologies. Key initiatives supporting telenursing include:

- WHO's webinars and apps for critical newborn care at AIIMS.
- The Indian Nursing Council's use of telemedicine for training and research.
- The Vishwabharati School's tele-nursing center in Mysore.
- PGIMER's telemedicine center educating nurses in Nepal and Afghanistan.
- ISRO's satellite connections in remote areas like J&K, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, link telemedicine centers to hospitals.
- A 2016 MoU between the Union Health Ministry and ISRO to expand telemedicine access to remote regions.

The Indian government is advancing national telemedicine projects and extending services to South Asian and African nations. A global survey of 719 nurses revealed strong support for telenursing as part of basic education, with 59% of telenurses reporting higher job satisfaction. Telenursing benefits particularly rural, underserved populations with chronic illnesses. According to ASSOCHAM, India's telemedicine industry is growing rapidly, potentially exceeding $32 million by 2020, revolutionizing healthcare in remote areas [5].

Emerging technologies like nanotechnology and AI are driving telenursing growth worldwide. In India, challenges such as staff shortages and the need for dedicated personnel for telenursing must be addressed. Proper training, clear communication protocols, and effective documentation are essential for efficient, safe, and quality care. Tele nurses must demonstrate clinical, technical, and critical thinking skills. Overcoming these challenges will help make telenursing a viable solution in India's resource-constrained healthcare system [4].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, telenursing improves patient care by enhancing access, reducing costs, and providing timely support, especially in underserved areas. It aids in managing chronic conditions and alleviates healthcare system burdens. While challenges like staffing and technology adaptation exist, proper training and emerging technologies can overcome these issues. With ongoing development, telenursing has the potential to become a vital part of India's healthcare system, particularly in remote regions.

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