

Perception and challenges of telehealth among healthcare providers in Najran, Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

Background/Aim: Recently the developments in technology have had a positive impact on various sectors, including healthcare. This study aims to identify the perception and barriers of tele-health in Saudi Arabia.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was carried out between October 2022 to May 2023 in Najran, Saudi Arabia. It was conducted among 520 healthcare workers (HCWs) working at Najran hospitals who completed the online survey. The data was collected by an online questionnaire and analyzed by SPSS version 24.

Results: The findings showed that the study was conducted among both male (60%) and female (40%). Among them, nurses constituted 25.4% (n=132), followed by physicians 21.9% (n=114), respiratory and physiotherapists 21% (n=109), radiology technicians 18.7% (n=97), and pharmacists 13.1% (n=68). Out of 520, only 213 (41%) had used tele-health applications. Around 43% of HCWs felt relaxing while using the application, and 45.45% perceived it as being useful for patients with transportation difficulties. Additionally, 38% believed that it provides a confidential way of protecting patients' information, and 36% would like to receive more training. In terms of beliefs, 42.5% of HCWs strongly agree that the application implied major modifications in their routine practice. Moreover 72% of the participants reported that technical issues could be one of the top challenges that may face tele-health usages. **Conclusion:** The HCWs perceived the use of tele-health as positive, valuable and confidential in monitoring and providing health care. However, obstacles such as the lack of time or a busy schedule delayed the use of tele-health among HCWs in Najran, Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: tele-health; healthcare workers; nurses; barriers; perception

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