

APodA Resource

Online Podiatry - Accessing Health Experts with Telehealth Technology

What is Telehealth?

Telehealth, in the context of the Australian healthcare setting, can be defined as the use of videoconferencing technologies to conduct a medical consultation where audio and visual information is exchanged in real time.

Who is this online service ideal for?

Podiatrists should determine which patients are suitable for telehealth based on available resources, technology and the urgency of medical care. Podiatrists providing telehealth consultation services should determine whether a telehealth consultation is the most appropriate type of consultation for each patient.

The decision to use telehealth incorporates the following factors:

- **Clinical:** continuity of care, shared care, and the best model of care for the individual.
- **Practical:** availability of appropriate technology and patient-end support. The quality of the technology at the remote site will play a significant role in the information gained during the clinical consultation.
- **Patients' needs:** ability of the patient to travel, plus their family, work and cultural situation. Physicians should also consider the patient's capacity to participate. For example, a video consultation may be inappropriate for patients with vision or hearing impairments

Telehealth in practice and technical aspects

Telehealth is no different from any other consultation and should be conducted in a similar manner to a face-to-face consultation. A telehealth consultation of high quality is one in which recommendations for assessment, clarification of diagnosis, and recommendations for treatment and review are clearly communicated as per current best practice models of care.

The basic requirement of telehealth is the transfer of audio and visual data in real time between the specialist and the patient. To conduct telehealth consultations, telehealth-specific hardware or software, or the use of telehealth and videoconferencing rooms in hospitals, are not necessary as some consumer-based products can be used effectively.




The choice to use particular technologies rests with individual clinicians and is dependent on context.

Adequate performance

The information and communications technology used for telehealth should be fit for the clinical purpose of the consultation. Specifically:

- the equipment is reliable and works well over the locally available network and bandwidth
- the equipment is compatible with equipment used by the patient end health worker
- the equipment and network are secure, and privacy and confidentiality during the consultation can be ensured
- the equipment is of a high enough quality to facilitate good communication between all participants and accurate transfer of clinical information

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Questions or concerns?

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