Tele-Dentistry

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Recent advances in technology has brought health care services to door step. There has been a tremendous increase in the use of internet in both rural and urban population. As we walk around, we can see how the use of smartphones have taken over our lives. From the use of maps to identify locations to making distance video calls this technology has made our lives so easy.

Once considered barriers, problems of distance, time and cost can be easily dealt with. Applying the same to dentistry, there is a whole new world that opens up with imbibition of technology. Right from managing patient appointments to educating patients with videos, everything can be done with a finger swipe.

Teleconsultations can be done in 2 ways- a) photographs, clinical findings can be stored and then assessed by field experts or b) Direct Videoconferencing. In a study by Torres-Pereira, et al. [1], Professional digital cameras were used to capture images and brief clinical history sent by email. In 80% of cases, 1 out of 2 experts gave correct diagnosis.

Thus, Tele-dentistry can facilitate diagnosis, dental care services and education despite boundaries of distance and time. We have a lot of potential for technology in diagnosing oral diseases and oral cancer, educating patients using emails, whatsapp or facebook applications, to manage patient follow up. Onus lies on the young minds to innovate and execute the same in the best possible way.

Bibliography