

Affordable rural Telemedicine is not just for developing economies, ROI matters everywhere

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Abstract

Statement of the Problem: Telemedicine had been languishing on the sidelines for more than two and a half decades in India. Many wrote of the need to bring telemedicine into the mainstream, regrettably without much success(1). It is a fact that before the Covid pandemic there actually were certain medical groups which insisted that telemedicine had no legal backing in India(2).

All of that changed in early 2020 with the Covid pandemic. The pandemic very forcefully and spectacularly, revealed the capabilities and reach of this technology. With the emergence of the pandemic the government of India, in the early part of 2020, quickly reviewed the situation and legalized Telemedicine practice by releasing a gazette notification on "Telemedicine Practice Guidelines 2020"(3). This led to the early diagnosis, isolation, treatment, care and follow-up of millions not just in remote villages but also the urban environment. During this period, true to the noble ideals of medicine, the focus was only on saving lives and cost did not matter.

It is however a fact that there are challenges in telemedicine with respect to (wrt) ensuring a good return on investment (ROI). It has, traditionally, been difficult to justify the costs of telemedicine from the hardnosed point of view of an accountant. This is because it is difficult for doctors to convert the tears of gratitude and grateful thanks of a mother (whose baby was saved due to an early telemedicine consultation) into Rupees or Dollars, that the accountant can add to his profit and loss statement. This is not just a problem for developing countries; advanced nations too, are acutely aware of these challenges(4).

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Biography

Dr. Lavanian Dorairaj, MBBS (Poona 1980), is a senior clinician and healthcare Informatician, with over 40 years of rich and diversified experience in Healthcare, Telehealth and healthcare Informatics. A certified expert in HL7, DICOM, ICD10 migration, EDI, HIPAA 5010 migration, SNOMED-CT, LOINC, CPT, HIS, EMR and EHRs, he is a Certified HL7 V2.3 Control Specialist and is the past Chair - HL7 India. His Core competencies in Healthcare and Healthcare informatics span Consultancy (incl Risk, change and transition), Strategy,

Project Management, Training and implementation.

He is now evangelizing a game changing rural healthcare invention, the AmbuPod. The AmbuPod is a revolutionary, fully loaded, patent (pending) invention that is a micro-ambulance and a telemedicine enabled mobile clinic. This revolutionary invention has the capability to provide highly affordable, quality based, 24/7 healthcare to villages in Asia, Africa and South America.