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Digital Transformation in the Health and Care Professions (BMHP6026)

Telehealth

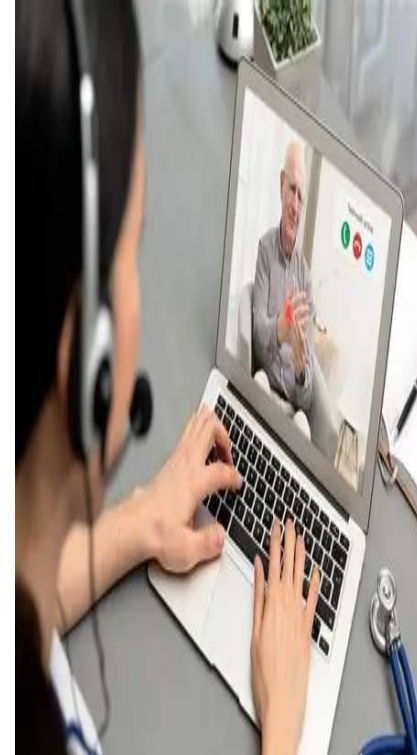
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Use of AI Acknowledgement

- I can confirm that I have not used AI

Introduction

- Telehealth: remote delivery of healthcare using digital communication.
- Includes video consultations, remote monitoring, and mobile health apps.
- Adoption accelerated over the last decade, especially during COVID-19.
- Supported by NHS England's digital-first strategy.
- Continued expansion through virtual wards and remote monitoring (NHS England, 2023).



Why Telehealth Matters

- Addresses rising demand and workforce shortages.
- Supports NHS Long-Term Plan goals.
- Ensures continuity of care during emergencies.
- Modernises UK healthcare infrastructure (Health Committee, 2023).

Impact on Workforce

- Nurses: remote triage, digital monitoring, virtual education.
- GPs: 70%+ consultations remote during COVID-19 (RCGP, 2020).
- Social care: remote assessments and case management.

New evidence

- Clinicians increasingly rely on digital diagnostic tools (BMJ, 2023).

Challenges

- Digital skill gaps.
- Increased workload and digital fatigue.
- Concerns about depersonalised care.

Impact on service delivery

- **Transformation**

- Shift from face-to-face to virtual consultations.
- Reduced waiting times and improved flexibility.
- Remote monitoring improves chronic disease management.
- **New evidence**
 - Virtual wards reduce hospital admissions (NHS England, 2023).

Efficiency

- Millions saved annually (DHSC, 2018).
- Reduced travel and admin burden.

Risks

- Diagnostic limitations.
- Cybersecurity vulnerabilities.
- Interoperability issues.

Equity concerns

- Digital exclusion for the elderly, low-income groups, rural communities.

Impact on patients

- **Positive experiences**

- Convenience, reduced travel, shorter waiting times.
- 78% of UK patients report positive experiences (NHS Digital, 2022).
- Increased engagement and autonomy.

- **New evidence**

- Telehealth improves medication adherence (Public Health England, 2022).

Challenges

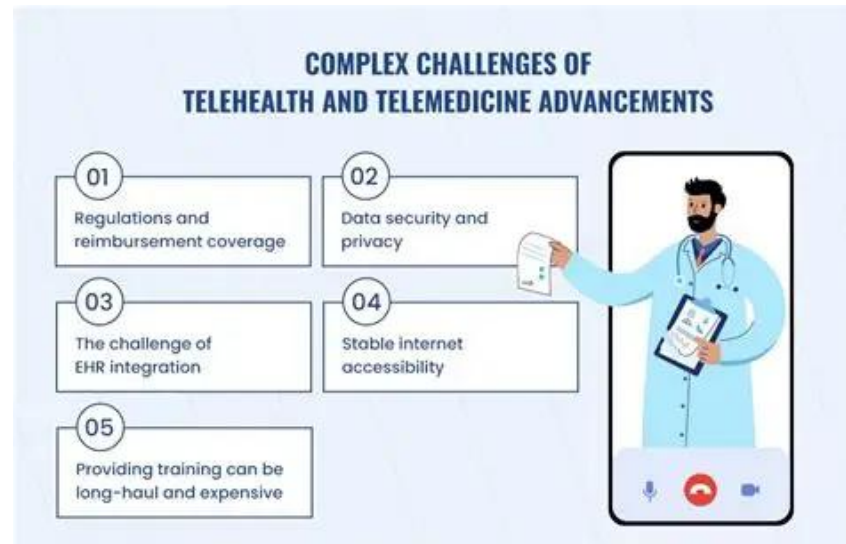
- Technical difficulties.
- Privacy concerns.
- Lack of physical examination.
- Older adults may struggle with digital platforms.
- **Pandemic impact**
- Ensured continuity of care but highlighted digital literacy gaps.

Impact on the community

- **Shift in care location**
 - More care delivered at home and in community settings.
 - Reduced hospital admissions.
- **Family involvement**
 - Easier participation in consultations.
 - Supports shared decision-making.
 - Raises consent and privacy issues.
- **Public health benefits**
 - Digital tools support prevention, screening, and health education.
 - Improved vaccination uptake (NHS England, 2023).
- **Digital inequality**
 - Communities without reliable internet or devices face exclusion.

Challenges of the innovation

- Digital divide
- Cybersecurity risks
- Diagnostic limitations
- Staff burnout
- Technology failures
- Lack of digital literacy
- Interoperability issues
- Uneven adoption across regions (Health Committee, 2023)



Recommendations

- Expand digital literacy training for staff and patients.
- Improve broadband access and device provision.
- Strengthen cybersecurity and data protection.
- Maintain hybrid care models (virtual + in-person).
- Invest in interoperable digital systems.
- Support social care professionals.
- Increase funding for virtual wards (NHS England, 2023).
- Regular evaluation of telehealth effectiveness.

Conclusion

Telehealth is essential in modern UK healthcare.

It has transformed workforce roles, service delivery, patient experience, and community health.

Benefits: accessibility, efficiency, empowerment, reduced costs.

Challenges: digital exclusion, safety concerns, workforce strain.

Strong policies needed to ensure equity and quality.

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