

Towards a Framework for Assessing the Impact of Telemedicine in Developing Country Environments: Couching the IOM Model within the new WHO Health System Framework

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Despite the growing use of telemedicine, policy advice to low and middle income countries on this technology remains a challenge. These countries account for 84% of the world's population and 93% of the disease burden. Yet they spend only 11% of world expenditure on health. In order to offer sound advice to them, it is important to strengthen the evidence base on the impact of telemedicine on, and identify best practices in, its use for, improving resource generation and service provision, increasing coverage of populations in need and supporting assessment of provider performance.

A first step in building the evidence base is development of an appropriate framework for assessing telemedicine's contribution, not only in terms of its impact on structure and process in the health care system, but preferably in terms of its influence on outcomes. In this vein the paper attempts to couch the Institute of Medicine (IOM) model, within the new WHO health system framework. It is expected that this will lead to a framework that addresses the problem of causal attribution, is consistent with the IOM framework and takes into account the paucity of data in developing countries environments.