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Regional Rise in Orthopedic Utilization of Virtual and Telehealth Visits during COVID-19

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Keywords

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Abstract

Introduction

During the past two decades, there has been a growing interest in the use of telehealth and virtual visits in Orthopedic Surgery practice groups. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increased need to provide care out of the traditional setting. This study sought to examine trends within the state of Oregon with regards to the use of telemedicine and virtual visits following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

In this descriptive study, we performed a telephone survey inquiring about the use of telehealth and virtual visits prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic in the state of Oregon as well as the platforms used to conduct such visits. We performed quantitative descriptive statistics using Microsoft Excel.

Results

We identified 369 orthopedic surgeons with a survey response rate of 86%. One group of the 50 identified groups residing at the state's only academic medical center was utilizing virtual visits prior to the pandemic whereas after the beginning of the pandemic, 88% had begun using virtual visits. Multiple platforms were utilized with Doximity, Epic, and Zoom being the most common, accounting for 33%, 17.7% and 15.6% of the platforms used respectively. Virtual visits and telehealth were used for all type of patient encounters by 80% of groups surveyed.

Conclusions

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of telehealth and virtual visits have increased significantly in the state of Oregon. Multiple platforms are currently being utilized and

further research is needed to better understand the clinical and cost implications of this change.