



Adverse Event Reporting in the Era of Telehealth: Challenges and Opportunities

Michael Hoerger*

Department of Medicine, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA

ABOUT THE STUDY

The rapid expansion of telehealth services has transformed the healthcare landscape, offering convenience, accessibility, and efficiency for both patients and providers. However, this shift has also brought forth new challenges, particularly in the realm of adverse event reporting. Adverse events in telehealth can encompass a wide range of incidents, from misdiagnoses to technical glitches, and addressing them requires a robust reporting system. In this article, we will explore the challenges and opportunities associated with adverse event reporting in the era of telehealth.

Challenges in adverse event reporting

Telehealth platforms and practices vary widely, making it challenging to establish standardized reporting protocols. Unlike traditional healthcare settings, where incident reporting systems are well-established, telehealth lacks a universal framework for adverse event reporting. This lack of standardization can hinder the identification, tracking, and analysis of adverse events.

Telehealth relies heavily on technology, and technical glitches or failures can lead to adverse events. These may include audio or video disruptions, data breaches, or software malfunctions. Reporting such incidents requires not only understanding of the medical aspect but also technological expertise, which may be lacking in some cases.

In telehealth, patients play a more active role in their care. This increased responsibility can lead to underreporting of adverse events due to patients' uncertainty or reluctance to report issues. Ensuring patient engagement in the reporting process is crucial for capturing a comprehensive picture of adverse events.

Privacy is a paramount concern in healthcare, and telehealth is no exception. Patients may be hesitant to report adverse events if they fear their personal health information may be compromised. Striking a balance between privacy and reporting is a challenge that needs to be addressed.

Opportunities for improvement

As technology plays a central role in telehealth, it can also be harnessed to improve adverse event reporting. Implementing user-friendly reporting tools within telehealth platforms can simplify the process and encourage patients and providers to report incidents promptly.

The healthcare industry should work collaboratively to develop standardized adverse event reporting protocols for telehealth. These protocols should define the types of events that need reporting, the reporting process, and the responsible parties. Standardization can enhance data collection and analysis.

Education and training programs for healthcare professionals and patients can promote awareness of the importance of adverse event reporting in telehealth. Providers should be equipped with the skills to identify and report events effectively, while patients should understand their role in the process.

The data collected through adverse event reporting can be invaluable for improving telehealth services. Analyzing reported events can identify trends, areas for improvement, and potential risks. Feedback loops can be established to ensure continuous quality improvement.

CONCLUSION

Adverse event reporting in the era of telehealth presents both challenges and opportunities. While the lack of standardization and technological issues can hinder the reporting process, technology-driven solutions, standardization efforts, education, and data analytics offer ways to address these challenges.

Efforts to improve adverse event reporting in telehealth are essential to ensure patient safety, enhance the quality of care, and maintain trust in remote healthcare delivery. As telehealth continues to evolve, a concerted effort from healthcare organizations, technology providers, and regulatory bodies is necessary to establish a robust and effective adverse event reporting system that supports the ever-expanding telehealth landscape.

Correspondence to: Michael Hoerger, Department of Medicine, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA, E-mail: hoergermic@protonmail.com

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