

TELEHEALTH/TELEMEDICINE

Telehealth, or telemedicine, is broadly defined as using communications technologies to provide health care at a distance. Telehealth has become a valuable tool thanks to combined advances in communications, computer science, informatics, and medical technologies.¹ While telehealth gained popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has since demonstrated effectiveness in improving medical care through teleconsultation and remote patient monitoring.

★ FREE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

Access to Resources Necessary to Sustain Telehealth Use in Athletic Training Facilities (*Patel et al, 2022*) S-289.

The availability of resources needed for telehealth vary in athletic training. Only two-thirds of athletic trainers with the proper materials have used telehealth in their practice.

Applying the Transtheoretical Model for Change to the Adoption of Telemedicine by Athletic Trainers (*Winkermann et al, 2022*) S-291.

Our results suggest that most ATs have recently changed their delivery of healthcare in the last 6+ months and intend to continue using telemedicine.

Factors Affecting Adoption of Telemedicine in Athletic Training (*Griffin et al, 2022*) S-292.

Lack of understanding and leadership are the biggest barriers to telemedicine adoption across the profession.

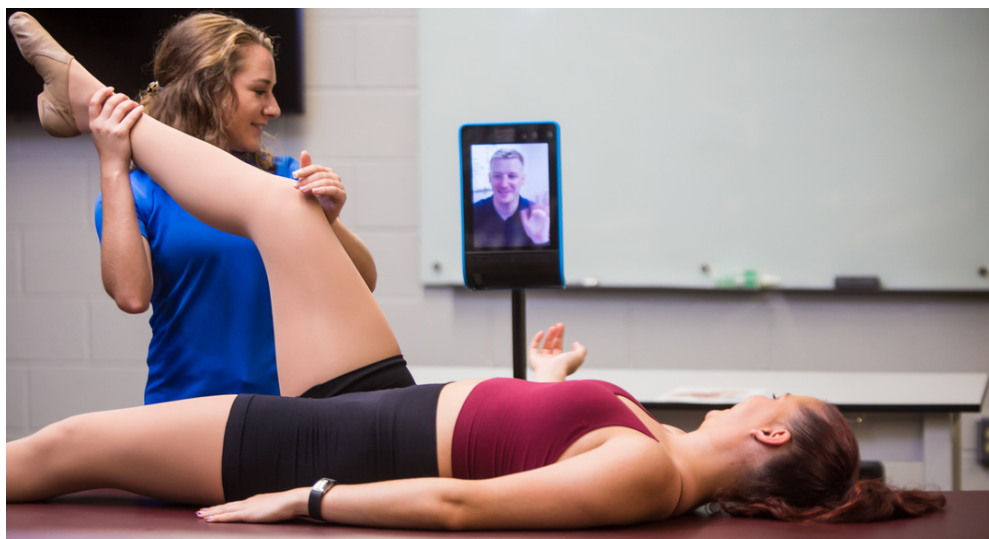


Photo Courtesy of Association for Athletic Training Education

from RECENT ARTICLES

"Telemedicine Experiences of Athletic Trainers and Orthopaedic Physicians for Patients With Musculoskeletal Conditions" *Winkermann et al, 2020*. Telemedicine allowed for collaborative practice between the orthopaedic physician and athletic trainer in real-time to promote continuity of care in managing patients with musculoskeletal injuries.

"Athletic Trainers' Experiences and Perceptions Regarding Telemedicine" *Monk et al, 2021*. ATs felt there was a lack of knowledge surrounding the implementation of telehealth and noted the importance of improving interviewing skills to make up for the lack of a hands-on patient evaluation. Overall, the perceived benefits of telemedicine expressed by participants included the ease of access to health care for patients, the ability to triage, and quicker determination of a care plan.

"The Validity and Reliability of Assessments Through Telemedicine: An Evidence-to-Practice Review" *Givens et al, 2023*. The guiding systematic review found ROM measures completed using an internet goniometer, functional outcome measures, balance, and gait displayed exceptional levels of reliability. Assessment of posture displayed good results with reliability but could have produced better results in validity. Muscle strength with a facilitator to apply the test demonstrated good validity and reliability.

"Feasibility and Accuracy of Teleconcussion for Acute Evaluation of Suspected Concussion" *Vargas et al, 2017*. There was a high level of agreement between face-to-face concussion assessments and teleconcussion assessments using the SAC, sideline K-D, and mBESS assessments.

"Athletic Trainers' Exposure to Telemedicine Influences" *Connell et al, 2021*. Participants who had identified as having previously used telemedicine had a higher perception of its advantages and saw a greater perceived necessity for use in practice. Therefore, ATs may benefit from formal exposure to telemedicine through continuing education.

USES & BENEFITS IN PRACTICE

The use of telehealth can improve the delivery of patient-centered care by:

- Increasing access to care regardless of their physical location, which can, in turn, lead to improved compliance and patient outcomes
- Reducing healthcare costs
- Providing added patient privacy and reducing the chances of sensitive information being overheard
- Promoting enhanced communication between patients and providers

RESOURCES

- **AMA:** [Telehealth Visit Etiquette Checklist](#)
- **HRSA:** [Office for the Advancement of Telehealth \(OAT\)](#)
- **HHS:** [Informational resources for telehealth](#)
- **NATA:** [Telehealth resources](#)
- **The AT Tapes:** [Telemedicine in Athletic Training](#)

1. NIH. Telehealth. N.D. Accessed October 10, 2023. www.nibib.nih.gov/science-education/science-topics/telehealth.

