

# Geriatric Teledermatology

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I have no conflicts of interest.

# Geriatric Tele dermatology

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- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, **CMS expanded telemedicine access** for Americans >65 years old.
- Although this shift has been important and with great benefit to many, **challenges and limitations** have become apparent in a subset of older patients
- **Older Adults**
  - *Independent*: minimal to no physical/cognitive issues that would hamper tele dermatology engagement
  - *Semi-dependent*: need some assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs), and would need assistance with taking photos, logging on to website, navigating the portal
  - *Dependent*: Unable to conduct ADLs – would need a nurse or health aide to complete the consult

# Technology Considerations

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- 92% of older adults have a cellphone, only 61% have a smartphone
- In 2018, 41.4% of Medicare beneficiaries did not have access to a computer with internet
- Only 64% of adults > 65 yo (2021) say they have broadband at home.

*% of U.S. adults who say they own a ...*

	<b>Cellphone</b>	<b>Smartphone</b>	<b>Cellphone, but not smartphone</b>
Total	97%	85%	11%
Ages 18-29	100%	96%	4%
30-49	100%	95%	5%
50-64	97%	83%	12%
65+	92%	61%	29%

## **Effectively engaging geriatric patients via tele dermatology**

*Cory L. Simpson, MD, PhD and Carrie L. Kovarik, MD*

### ***Present all available options for virtual visits***

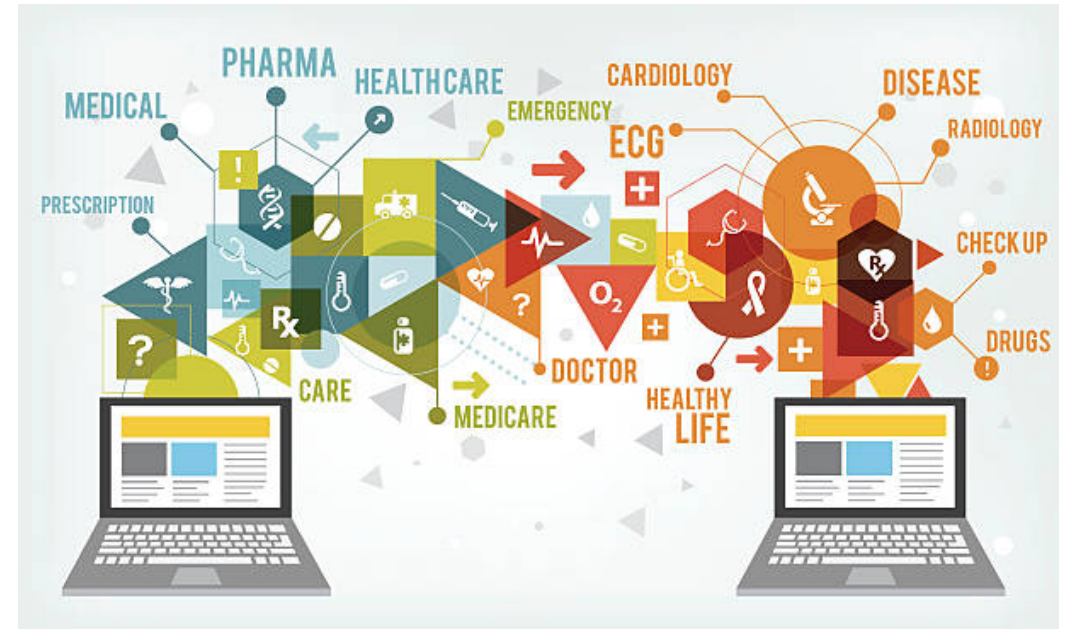
- Do not assume a patient's age will dictate willingness or ability to engage in virtual care.
- Many older patients are familiar with video chat.
- For patients uncomfortable with a live video visit, consider digital photographs complemented by telephone discussion (as well as assistance by support network).
- For those without internet/smartphone access, telephone-only encounters can still be effective.

# Effectively engaging geriatric patients via teledermatology

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## ***Reduce the steps to connect***

- Avoid apps that require patients to sign up for an account and enter excessive information.
- Look for telemedicine platforms that can be accessed directly within standard web browsers.
- Send invitations at the appointment time via text message or e-mail containing a direct link to the encounter.

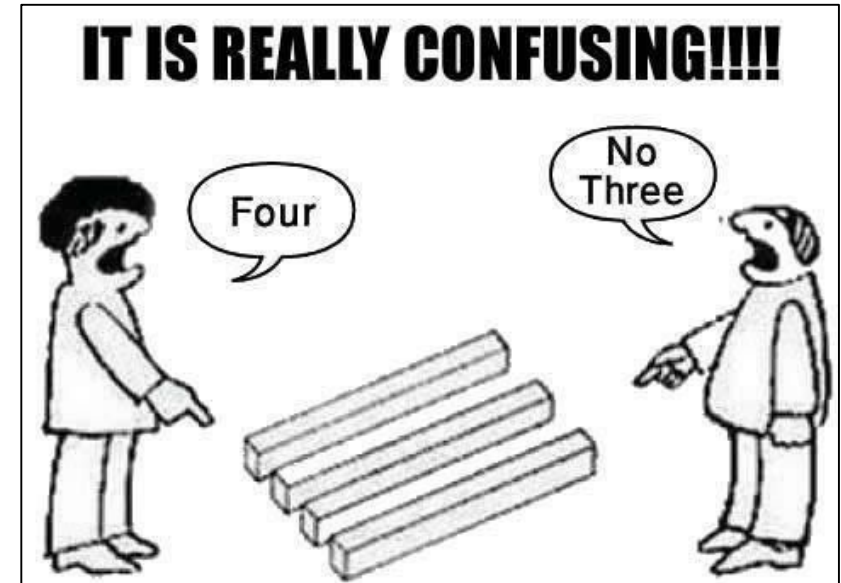


# Effectively engaging geriatric patients via teledermatology

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## ***Provide clear, step-by-step instructions***

- Swap ambiguous/technical jargon for descriptive terms.
- Simple/pictorial instructions may be required, because this leaves less room for missteps.
- A brief demonstration video or screenshots can also be helpful.



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### ***Offer a trial run and prepare in advance!***

- Trained staff members familiar with the platform can prepare patients.
- Briefly testing the platform in advance of the appointment will build patient confidence and prevent technical delays during live virtual visits.
- Encourage use of larger touchscreen tablets to make visual acuity less of a barrier.
- For those with limited dexterity or tremor, a mounted webcam that can be detached may be better than a handheld device.
- Encourage use of speakerphone, which frees the patient's hands to write down recommendations.



# Effectively engaging geriatric patients via teledermatology

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## ***Arrange for support***

- Use teledermatology platforms that permit simultaneous communication between more than 2 parties, so older patients can conduct virtual visits with a trusted advocate.
- Advocates may offer assistance with historical information and record treatment instructions.
- Alternatively, arrange for a member of their support system to assist in person



# Nursing Home Telemedicine

- Store-and-forward or hybrid
- Success of the teledermatology is dependent on the ability of nurses to photograph patients, enter clinical histories and request appointments in a timely manner
- Designate a small number of nurses for teledermatology tasks, trained in high-resolution image photography, navigating the telehealth software, and training new staff.



# Nursing Home Telemedicine

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## ***Considerations when setting up:***

- Insurance coverage/Reimbursement for different types of teledermatology
- Training nurses in image capture, clear designation of tasks and provision of clear schedules.
- Teledermatology software and medical record navigation/integration.
- Clear communication between nurses, dermatologists, and primary care.
- Confirming a mode of transport for patients with physical limitations to dermatology office if in-person visit is recommended.

Thank you

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