

# GMC telemedicine research

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Working with doctors Working for patients

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# What is telemedicine?

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“Telemedicine” means the practice of medicine or the rendering of health care services using electronic audio-visual communications and information technologies or other means, including interactive audio with asynchronous store-and-forward transmission, between a licensee in one location and a patient in another location with or without an intervening health care provider. Telemedicine includes asynchronous store-and-forward technologies, remote monitoring, and real-time interactive services, including teleradiology and telepathology. Telemedicine shall not include the provision of medical services only through an audio-only telephone, e-mail, instant messaging, facsimile transmission, or U.S. mail or other parcel service, or any combination thereof.

**Main Board of Licensure in Medicine Telemedicine Standards of Practice**

## Simple definition...

It is a real-time video meeting with a doctor, or other healthcare professional, via an app/website using a phone/tablet/PC etc.

## Exploratory piece of research

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### **Main objectives** to understand:

1. the definition of telemedicine
2. frameworks for telemedicine regulation, i.e. who regulates telemedicine, how binding the regulation is, and what role these regulators play in a wide regulatory context
3. regulation applicable to individual doctors who provide telemedicine services, including issues of responsibility and issues associated with compliance
4. issues associated with telemedicine being provided across jurisdictions

## 4 phase approach

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**1**

**Initial desk research**

**2**

**30 X online survey completions**

**3**

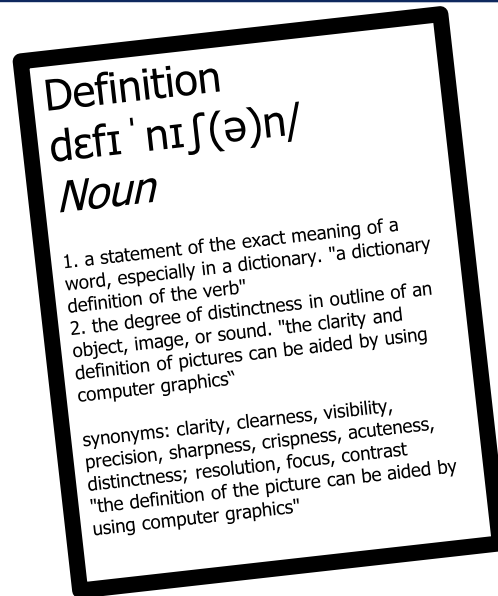
**13 X telephone interviews**

**4**

**Subsequent in-depth desk research**

# Telemedicine is defined in a **similar manner** across regulators

With some exceptions, e.g. some countries prefer to use the word 'telehealth'



Many regulators stress that telemedicine should be understood as another way of providing healthcare, rather than as a distinct medical service in its own right

# All sampled territories required doctors to be licensed

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## However in...

### USA + Canada

In the USA and many in Canada require a remote doctor to be licensed or registered with the regulator in the **jurisdiction of the patient**

### Europe

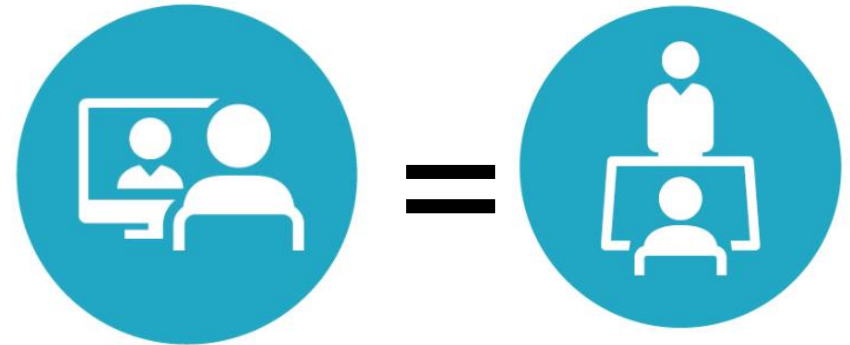
**Doctors** are generally required to be **licensed only with the regulator in their jurisdiction** regardless of where the patient is located (possibly driven by EU Directive on electronic commerce)

A number of USA states have (or have had) a special abbreviated licence for telemedicine services only - (often granted at a lesser fee or in a shorter timeframe, or for a limited number of patients)

# Requirements for the provision of telemedicine

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Crucially **same standard of care** as that of face-to-face



## But also...

- telemedicine is an appropriate method of delivering healthcare for given patient
- sufficient information regarding a patient's medical history and current condition collected
- ensuring confidentiality
- safety and security of the exchanged information
- confirming a patient's identity
- maintaining medical records

Some territories also have specific rules for telepathology, teleradiology and teledermatology

# Regulatory frameworks for telemedicine

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Requirements other than licensing are often harder to enforce, even though many are in the form of binding standards.

Adherence to these standards is usually not proactively monitored but rather investigated on a case-by-case basis in response to complaints.

Since a majority (if not all) of the 'telemedicine' requirements are in fact consistent with the requirements applicable to standard healthcare services, the violation of those requirements could be generally considered not to be specific to telemedicine per se.



## Further information

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The full research report can be read at:

<https://www.gmc-uk.org/about/what-we-do-and-why/data-and-research/research-and-insight-archive>