Telemedicine in neurology

Sir,

The publication of a review article “Telemedicine in neurology: underutilized potential” by Misra et al[1] in the March 2005 issue shows that telemedicine in India has at last come of age. The author has rightly pointed out that publications from India in indexed journals in this field are not many. However, telemedicine has been used in clinical neurology and neurosurgery in India since 1999.[2–4] Some of us who used this technology as early as 1999, are delighted to note that at last telemedicine is slowly being accepted. It will never ever be possible to provide adequate neurological care to the 800 million Indians living in suburban and rural India where most of us do not live. We have in the last 6 years, given about 12,000 teleconsultations from Chennai alone. Three hundred and seventy-five of the 550 consultations in neurosciences have been review of already treated patients. Excepting touch (even this may be eventually possible) detailed teleneurological examination including visualization of the fundus, evaluating the whole gamut of electrophysiological and neuroimaging investigations is possible today. We have held eight international (multipoint) teleconferences and six national teleconferences in neurosciences alone. A multipurpose mobile van with an X-ray, ultrasound, biochemistry laboratory, ECG, teleauscultation, and ophthalmoscopic evaluation will shortly be operational. Thanks to a VSAT on top of the van, the teleconsultant will be able to do a detailed clinical evaluation of a villager who is in the van. For the neurologist and neurosurgeon of the future ICT will mean Information and Communication Technology, which he should indeed master.

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References


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