Authors’ Reply

Sir,

We read with interest the comments on our paper entitled “Telemedicine in neurology: underutilized potential.”[1] Doubtless there is great awareness about the virtues of telemedicine in India and a number of interested groups have been applying it for teleconsultation for patient care. On Medline search, however, only a few articles on telenurology are seen from India, most of which have been cited in our paper. The groups that have been practicing telemedicine but have not published their experience in Indexed journals are not cited in our paper. It is important that the experience of different groups should be documented and brought to the notice of the scientific community so that the leadership of India in the field of software should also be extended to the field of telemedicine. It is heartening that after the publication of our paper, a few more articles on telemedicine have been published from India and are mentioned in the above-mentioned comments.

Currently, there is increasing interest in telemedicine in different regions of our country; however, the application of telemedicine has inherent contradictions. On one hand, telemedicine is needed for the development and health care of remote areas, which are often inaccessible and economically backward. On the other hand, telemedicine requires broadband telecommunication infrastructure, hardware and trained manpower all of which are expensive. However, for interested groups both governmental and private funding agencies should come forward and provide the much needed support. Telemedicine cannot be practiced in isolation; it is a group activity and its essence is connectivity and collaboration. The scope of telemedicine should be widened to include teaching and research besides patient care.

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