

# Telehealth Transformation: Navigating the Future of Oral Healthcare in 2024

Mr KC Makhubele – CEO, South African Dental Association

SADJ MAY 2024, Vol. 79 No.4 p185

Telemedicine has emerged as a revolutionary force in the rapidly changing healthcare landscape, transforming how oral health professionals interact with patients. As we commence 2024, incorporating telehealth services into dental practices should become a strategic necessity for dentists and oral health stakeholders.

Telehealth, often known as virtual care, has become a key component of modern healthcare delivery, marking a paradigm shift. For dentists and oral health professionals, adopting telehealth means more than just a reaction to global events; it symbolises a paradigm shift in patient care, accessibility, and office efficiency.

## Telehealth for Oral Healthcare:

**Remote Consultations:** Virtual consultations allow dentists to provide preliminary examinations, treatment planning, and post-operative follow-ups without the necessity for in-person visits.

**Teledentistry for Education:** Using virtual platforms to provide patient education, allowing individuals to better comprehend oral health practices and treatment regimens. **Emergency Triage:** Giving patients a virtual way to seek counsel during dental crises, allowing for prompt triage and guidance.

## Navigating Telehealth Implementation:

**Technology Integration:** Integrating user-friendly telehealth platforms with existing practice management systems. **Patient Education** includes explaining the benefits of telehealth to patients and providing detailed instructions for virtual appointments.

**Regulatory Compliance:** Ensuring compliance with telehealth rules, such as privacy and security standards, to secure patient information during virtual consultations.

## Overcoming Challenges:

While telehealth in dentistry offers numerous advantages, there are also drawbacks, such as the limitations of virtual examinations and the requirement for safe data transmission. Achieving a precise diagnosis typically necessitates a comprehensive examination along with the use of diagnostic tools like an x-ray. How can this be accomplished in a virtual context if it all? Dentists must overcome these obstacles by developing clear protocols, utilising emerging technologies, and constantly improving their telehealth practices.

Telehealth improves both access to care and the entire patient experience. Offering virtual consultations increases convenience, lowers travel time, and allows patients to communicate with oral health specialists from the comfort of their own homes.

The future of telehealth in dentistry is expected to grow with advancements in technology. Dentists and oral health stakeholders should stay current on growing telehealth trends, research creative applications, and be proactive in modifying their practices to meet patients' changing demands.

**Conclusion:** Telehealth in dentistry offers opportunity for oral health practitioners to improve patient care and practise resilience. By incorporating telehealth as a strategic tool in the dental toolset, dentists may not only negotiate current issues but also create the future landscape of oral healthcare in 2024 and beyond.

## NOTICE OF POSTPONEMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION (SADA) 2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The SADA FYE 2022 Annual General Meeting (AGM), previously set for 25 April 2024, is postponed due to finalisation of the auditing procedures. The majority of the work has been finalised, but the last parts are only being finalised in early April 2024. A new date will be communicated soon. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Dr N Osman

SADA Board of Directors

2 April 2024



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