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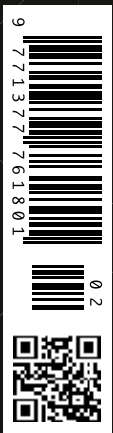
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# Harnessing the power of connected care and telehealth

## Major congress focuses on telehealth developments

Connected care and telehealth are playing a key role in the rapidly changing healthcare sector, but should be handled with care when implementing.



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The healthcare sector is one that is constantly and rapidly changing. Chronic disorders and complex disabilities are becoming more prevalent in certain medical fields. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle with regular visits to a local general practitioner can be challenging with the fast-paced nature of life. However, technological advances are playing a key role across all medical fields – not just from a clinical point of view with diagnostics and treatments becoming more advanced, but also from a connected care and telehealth perspective.

“ BY 2020 THE NUMBER OF CONNECTED WEARABLE DEVICES WORLDWIDE IS EXPECTED TO REACH 830 MILLION ”

Patients are becoming more aware of medical conditions and their health through the vast access they have at their fingertips via mobile and wearable devices. According to the Global Mobile Consumer Trends report by Deloitte in 2016, more than one-third of mobile consumers worldwide said they check their phone within five minutes of waking up in the morning, and 20 percent of these consumers check their phone more than 50 times a day (Deloitte 2017). The launch of the Fitbit in 2007 caused a surge in wearable devices and the segment took off with key players in the market releasing smartwatches, fitness trackers

and apparel to help consumers keep track of fitness levels. It is predicted that by 2020 the number of connected wearable devices worldwide is expected to reach 830 million, up from the 325 million devices currently in use (Statista 2017).

### Move towards preventative medicine

As a result, wearable technologies and connected devices are transforming healthcare towards preventative care models helping both clinicians and patients to monitor and manage high risk populations, chronic conditions, as well as keep track of fitness, blood pressure, and even sleep quality. Worldwide telemedicine applications are surging due to the high prevalence of chronic diseases, rising smartphone users and the consistent need for improved quality services.

With wearable technology becoming an essential part of our daily lifestyle, Arab Health 2018 - the largest gathering of healthcare and trade professionals in the MENA region – will see the introduction of Personal Healthcare Technology Zone. This brings an essential element to the exhibition this year, as it will provide industry professionals and visitors the opportunity to explore the latest in ‘Smart Healthcare Technology’ that connects patients to physicians, hospitals or clinics.

For medical practices, telemedicine adoption comes with many benefits. The world’s major regions are expected to see increases in healthcare spending ranging from 2.4 percent to 7.5 percent between 2015 and 2020 according to a 2017 report (Deloitte 2017). It is becoming more difficult for public health systems to sustain current

levels of service and affordability, causing many nations to explore discrete cost-containment measures. Telemedicine falls amongst these measures, along with other technology-assisted service provision and delivery methods, such as robots for drug dispensing, e-prescriptions, novel payment cards, patient administrative systems, electronic medical records (EMRs) and personal health records (PHRs).

## “ IMPLEMENTING TELEHEALTH PROMISES LONG-TERM SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS FOR BOTH CLINICS AND PATIENTS ”

### Financial efficiency

Implementing telehealth promises long-term significant savings for both clinics and patients, whilst also providing simple, on-demand care to patients, making healthcare more convenient and accessible. In addition to this, telehealth can help boost doctors' revenue by turning on-call hours into billable time, attracting new patients, reducing missed or cancelled appointments, and even reducing overheads for physicians who decide to switch to a flexible work-from-home model for part of the week. It also leads to more personalised and patient-centered approaches, which can ultimately lead to increased patient engagement.

Whilst telehealth continues to grow rapidly and adoption rates are increasing, it is important to consider the limitations. It is paramount to ensure that all staff are technically trained and have access to the necessary equipment. As the reliance on technology increases over the coming years, it is important for patients to maintain in-person consultations, regular check-ups and care-continuity.

The 43rd edition of Arab Health will also feature a brand-new, three-day Connected Care conference,

with each day covering a different theme; digital health, patient telehealth and home and long-term care.

Organised by the industry for the industry, the expert advisory board have handpicked the esteemed speaker line up who will be highlighting case studies and discussion points around the healthcare industries most pressing issues including, integration of digital healthcare, Electronic Health Record (EHR), cybersecurity, remote patient monitoring and patient satisfaction in home healthcare.

Arab Health 2018 will welcome over 4,200 exhibiting companies and 103,000 attendees from over 150 countries from 29 January – 1 February 2018 at the Dubai World Trade Centre. ■

### KEY POINTS



- ✓ Wearable technologies and connected devices are transforming healthcare and have the potential to help patients and clinicians to monitor and manage high risk populations, chronic conditions, as well as keep track of fitness, blood pressure, and even sleep quality
- ✓ Implementing telehealth initiatives in medical practices can save time, reduce cost and increase revenue but should be handled with care to ensure patient care continuity and safety
- ✓ Arab Health 2018 - the largest gathering of healthcare and trade professionals in the MENA region – will see the introduction of a Personal Healthcare Technology Zone
- ✓ The 43rd edition of the exhibition will also feature a brand-new, three-day Connected Care conference, with each day covering a different theme: digital health, patient telehealth and home and long-term care



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