

The Virtual Hospital: The Emergence of Telemedicine

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The current practice of medicine, while utilizing the advances in biological and physical science, still takes place in the physician office or hospital. Unfortunately, traditional practice as integrated into the current Healthcare system is unsustainable. Accommodating the increase demand for medical services with the attendant rising costs has caused a crisis in healthcare.

Telemedicine, the practice of medicine by means of mobile/internet is a transformative process that will impact healthcare globally. Already, teleradiology (diagnostic radiology remotely by means of digital images that are electronically exported) and electronic medical records are gaining wide acceptance. The ability to distribute medical

services by means of mobile and internet technology is a natural and almost irresistible direction for the field of Medicine.

The healthcare crisis has created an opportunity for new solutions and mobile/Internet technology has laid the infrastructure upon which one can build a powerful, innovative and badly needed platform for health services: The Global Virtual Hospital (GVH). The GVH will be a group of connected centers around the world that overlap (in time zones) throughout the working day. Patients will have access through the Internet or mobile phones. Medical records will be electronically stored, shared among authorized personal and updated with each medical interaction. The GVH, will serve as a platform and laboratory for the creation of innovative devices and technology that will improve the remote interaction. The Global Virtual Hospital System will exemplify the convergence of technology and medicine and will be integrated into standard practice in the next 5-10 years.