

Editorial

TELEDENTISTRY – A NEW PATH TO BE FOLLOWED

Teledentistry can be understood as the provision of services related to oral health care by professionals, mediated by use of information and communication technologies. Teleassistance, teleconsulting and formative second opinions, as well as activities related to permanent education courses and lectures, are among the most commonly used interaction forms.^{1,2} Evidence suggests that the use of teleodontology in primary health care (PHC) can be beneficial in remote areas where access to specialists is restricted.². Besides that, the creation of training and/or consulting centers for professionals in the public services network (for medium and high complexity PHC) at universities, using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), may increase the use of active methodologies for in-service teaching-learning.⁴

Evidence suggests that the use of teledentistry systems reduces the number of incorrect referrals to reference services. The use of asynchronous strategies also seems to be a cost-effective model of health intervention, as described by Marino and collaborators (2016). The development of applications for mobile devices can be seen as an example of optimization of health attention going through prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and control/maintenance.⁷

However, one of the possible difficulties related to the use of teledentistry is related to familiarity with computers, especially when we observe that a significant percentage of technical professionals don't have a good knowledge of technological resources. Another important point to be discussed refers to internet access away from large urban centers, since some cities in the countryside have unreliable internet access.⁸

According to Schneider and collaborators,⁹ mobility, and connectivity are assumptions of modern society that do not show signs of weakening. Thus, the incorporation of teledentistry strategies will justify the attention to oral health as well as democratize access to quality technical information and rationalize the use of the resources available. Therefore, it is necessary to increase investments in public policies that support teledentistry and telehealth, taking into consideration the principle of integrality of SUS (Unified Health System) and the precepts of the National Curriculum Guidelines for the training of human resources.

Dra. Caren Serra Bavaresco

Community Health Service Dentist – GHC/RS

Specialist in Public Health (ABO-RS)

Master's in Biochemistry (UFRGS)

PhD in Biochemistry (UFRGS)

*Teleconsultant and Teleregulator of Telehealth Center of Rio Grande do Sul
(2007 – 2014).*

*Coordinator of the research group on Technological Resources and Innovations in
Dentistry (RITO-ULBRA) and Teledentistry Channel ODONTO Drops (ULBRA-Canoas).*

Dr. Flávio Renato Reis Moura

Dentist

Professor of the Dentistry Department of the Universidade Luterna do Brasil – Canoas

Integrated Residency Preceptor ULBRA-Canoas

Master's in Operative Dentistry (UFPEL)

PhD in Dentistry – Emphasis on Public Health (ULBRA)

Dra. Myrian Corrêa da Câmara Hewson Brew

Dentist

Professor of the Dentistry Department of Universidade Luterana do Brasil – Canoas

Master's in Public Health (ULBRA)

PhD in Cellular and Molecular Biology (PUCRS)

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