

# Dermatology residents and teledermatology education during COVID-19

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Sir,

The world is now witnessing a global change as a result of the new virus SARS-CoV-2 that emerged in Wuhan, China, and spread across the globe. Changes have happened on almost every level of social functioning. We have been adopting preventative measures and changing our day-to-day habits for several months now, but we are yet to learn how COVID-19 will affect our employment and future professional careers. As for education and professional development, I believe that the most affected are those professionally occupied with medicine and for whom working with patients is the most basic way of learning and improving. Almost anywhere in the world, dermatologists now engage in telemedicine to work with patients on less urgent ailments, while hospitals only accept emergencies. Telemedicine is the use of telecommunications technologies to provide remote health care [1]. Technological advances have progressively improved the ability of clinicians to care for diverse patient populations in need of dermatological expertise. Teledermatology has proven to be a reliable consultation tool in the majority of studies [2]. In our country, where the number of dermatology patients is significantly reduced, telemedicine is evolving, and we expect it to be used for a long time to come. Because of the visual character of the dermatological specialty, teledermatology is particularly appropriate in the use of telemedicine and is becoming a major tool for dermatological consultation [2].

As dermatology residents, we are in a position to develop telemedicine and work with patients online. We perform daily examinations of less urgent cases through the Internet, but we, nonetheless, have to face and deal with

some difficulties in our practice. With us as doctors on their way to becoming dermatologists, physical contact with patients is especially important as it makes proper examination possible. The main challenge we face as residents is that the appearance of a dermatological change in real life and of such in a picture might not be alike. We also often learn that communication with patients online can be much more difficult, and the partial visibility of the body can sometimes be problematic when an examination of the whole body would be more helpful. We can say that, during the times of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of palpation and of the use of other dermatological instruments is what we have felt the most.

From here, we feel very much affected in the context of creating knowledge and gaining experience. Despite the impossibility of continuous learning as available before, we begin to introduce habits appropriate for the situation to reduce its negative consequences. Education has become more intensive through online courses, which we consider very fortunate. Despite the emergence of a state of global pandemic, our education is not finished and we will strive to grow in every way possible. Our professional future has been heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and, in our attempts to counteract the hindrance of education, telemedicine appears as the best opportunity offered to us.

## Consent

The examination of the patient was conducted according to the Declaration of Helsinki principles.

The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms. In the form the patient(s) has/have given his/her/

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their consent for his/her/their images and other clinical information to be reported in the journal. The patients understand that their names and initials will not be published and due efforts will be made to conceal their identity, but anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

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