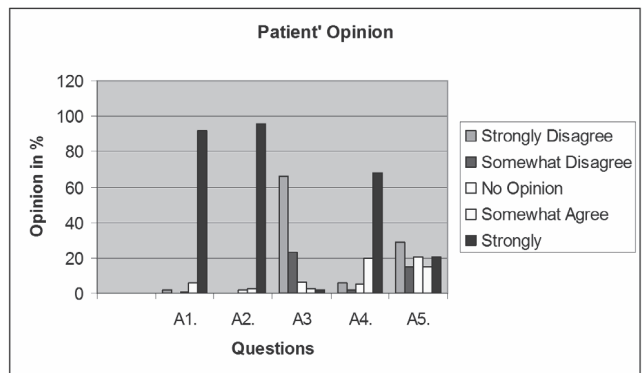


S.K. MEHER, S. KANT. **Awareness and attitudes of geriatric patients towards telemedicine in India.** *Gerontechnology* 2014;13(2):262; doi:10.4017/gt.2014.13.02.391.00 **Purpose** The patients coming to AIIMS (All Indian Institute of Medical Sciences) represent 13 Indian states, as found while collecting sample by simple random sampling. Among them, most patients visit from Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) (45) followed by Bihar (25), Haryana (17), and then by Uttaranchal (10). Many older patients do not like to visit the hospitals, because their health conditions and age make it difficult to travel long distance to the hospital's location. The time and travel patients must commit to visiting the hospital suggests that a telemedicine link between hospitals of Bihar and U.P. may help patients by saving their time and money, and provide them with consultations to comparable those received at tertiary care hospitals. However, elderly patients' attitudes toward, and awareness of, telemedicine are unclear and require further study. **Method** A cross-sectional study was undertaken to find out patients' awareness of, and attitude towards, telemedicine. A total of 121 patients from 13 states participated in the study, which was carried out from 16<sup>th</sup> April to 16<sup>th</sup> June 2013 through individual structured interviews. **Results & Discussion** Our research has shown that (*Figure 1*): (i) the majority of patient have positive attitudes towards telemedicine, and they find it very beneficial for rural patients; (ii) patients agree that telemedicine will save both time and money; (iii) patients find telemedicine to be beneficial for both urban and rural patients, though a few think that urban patients benefit more because of very poor health care facilities in rural villages; (iv) patients find telemedical consultations comfortable, despite the virtual distance from the tertiary care doctors, due to communication between the consulting doctors and tertiary care hospitals; and, (v) even after positive teleconsultations, patients still find telemedicine cannot replace face to face consultation. We conclude the following. (i) Web enabled telemedicine system should be implemented to help ease the flow of information and coordination within institutions, and thereby support better consultations with remote doctors, which can also help to save doctors' valuable time. Physicians are more interested in utilizing telemedicine if available at their desktop. (ii) In order to support better utilization of telemedicine, proper orientation programs should be organized for physicians and patients to improve outlooks and technological understanding in all institutions. (iii) It is suggested that, for the better utilization and promotion of telemedicine, it is important to update remote-end doctors' and patients' knowledge of telemedical technologies. The government should make provisions to make computers available at remote setups, so that they can understand the utilization of computers and internet, which will be helpful for increasing acceptance of new technologies like telemedicine. **Keywords:** communication & governance, telemedicine, geriatric patients; awareness, attitude **Address:** All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India; *E:* sushilmeher@gmail.com

*Table 1. Age distribution of participants*

Age, yrs	Number	Percentage
60-64	7	5.8
65-69	9	7.4
70-74	22	18.2
75-79	27	22.3
80-84	29	24.0
85-89	16	13.2
90-	11	9.1



*Figure 1. Results of the study; A1=Positive attitude towards telemedicine; A2=Telemedicine saves time and money; A3=Telemedicine is beneficial; A4=Telemedical consultations are comfortable; A5=Telemedicine can replace face to face consultation*