



INDIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (HQs.)

(Registered under the Societies Act XXI of 1860)
Mutually Affiliated with the British & Nepal Medical Associations

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16.04.2020

New Delhi

IMA on online and phone consultations

1. IMA recognises the use of online facility and phones by members in their professional services to patients only on two occasions.
 - a) In triaging patients and identifying patients who need to go over to the hospital.
 - b) Advising regular patients like Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension etc due for review to continue treatment.
2. IMA does not support use of telemedicine or online consultation for any other category of patients. Such practice is fallible and is potentially harmful to the patient. It can never replace clinical medicine and physical examination.
3. As of today there is lack of clarity on medico legal implications. Procedures prescribed by statutory bodies do not necessarily absolve the doctor from his liabilities.
4. Crass commercialisation of online platforms and misuse of data by such institutions including unethical promotions and even ranking of doctors are other lurking dangers.
5. Restricted usage of technology during the COVID 19 epidemic cannot justify replacement of face to face consultation with advantages of eye contact and body language as well in depth physical examination of the patient. At some point of time artificial intelligence and robots may take over such non contact hi tech consultations as well. IMA firmly believes in clinical medicine to be sacrosanct and irreplaceable.
6. Under the garb of COVID an overt and covert entry is being made to challenge the clinical wisdom of doctors. It is a direct attack on the Doctor's bonding with his patient. The tag line promoting Telemedicine is "upload your reports, make online payment and consult your Doctor". Ultimately this means clinical examination, which is our strength is not required. Western world has suffered because of this model. Indian doctors are the back bone of Health services in USA, UK, Australia, Gulf and many other countries because of their clinical talent. IMA does not support telemedicine. Telephone and online may be used in a restricted fashion according to the discretion of the doctor.

All members as well as the state and local branches of IMA may kindly take note of the point of view of IMA.

Dr Rajan Sharma
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Protect the Single and Couple Doctors Setup

All communications intended for headquarters office should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary General