WPA Global Guidelines for Telepsychiatry

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Introduction: The current pandemic has only confirmed the need for international collaboration and more extended use of telepsychiatry than before. Unfortunately, regulatory constraints and lack of standardization are posing significant barriers to the internationalization of telepsychiatry. A need for global guidelines and unified standardizations is of utmost importance in this rapidly growing but not yet well-established field. However, first, we ought to become familiar with its basics.

Objectives: - to present the main objectives and messages of the WPA (World Psychiatric Association) Global Guidelines for Telepsychiatry.

Methods: A structured review of the main challenges, innovations, and settings in the first global guidelines on telepsychiatry, published by WPA (World Psychiatric Association) in 2021.

Results: With proper preparation and thoughtful risk management, telepsychiatry can be an invaluable tool for allowing greater access to care. COVID19 offers the opportunity to advance our understanding of how to develop models of "traditional services with modern approaches" by the use of digital technologies. However, certain prerequisites must be fulfilled to achieve the desired goals. These prerequisites are e.g. choice of the technology, settings, patient/provider preferences as well as competencies and skills described in this document.

Conclusion: This WPA document may pave the way for the development of global regulations in order to break down the barriers of accessibility for both the professionals as well as for the patients worldwide. Further, it may help professionals in setting up a standardized telepsychiatry service(s) in addition to the existing mental health system(s).

52

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