**Telecounselling: a comprehensive examination of the benefits and drawbacks in terms of client and professional contentment.**

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**Abstract**

During the pandemic, there was a great need for social seclusion, which has become routine for the population. Because of a lack of social support and bleak outlooks, social isolation and working from home made it extremely difficult for many persons suffering from mental health difficulties. People who needed their regular social support found the seclusion extremely uncomfortable, and those who were already dealing with mental health concerns had to find a replacement in various settings. The advent of Telecounselling has aided many people in seeking social and emotional support during epidemic times; yet, there are numerous drawbacks. The purpose of this study paper is to emphasize the effectiveness as well as the disadvantages of telecounselling and the use of online assessment tools and their validity in today's world. For a successful execution and delivery of therapy and assistance, the study analyses systemically, if not thoroughly, the many data that imply both the impacts of telecounselling and if the same can be advised for future reasons.

*Keywords*: telecounselling, mental health, depression, therapy, social isolation, quality.

**Introduction**

Modern world cannot find its meaning and purpose without the smart phones and computer applications. The world that is fast forwarding toward developments and progressions has also transformed the mediums of traditional practises and has on-boarded them for its upgradation. We find greater comfort in engaging ourselves in the multitude of applications and software and wish to spend little time elsewhere, thus forgetting the need to have a social life and. Technological advancements have helped us progress towards a greater beneficiary life, however, these advancements have also hampered our social lives because there is lesser need or engagements in conversations and overuse of technology and the fact social media and other platforms have provided the necessary social support needed for many people is undeniable (Dorstyn, Santios et al.,2013).

It has been studied that online counselling and tele counselling provides an anonymous platform for many clients who can find the stance to be more expressive and hence they can feel comforted and has proven to be an effective treatment for anxiety and depression, although its comparative result was much lower than that of in-person counselling (Polti, Tagini et al., 2021). Telecounselling is easily available for both urban and rural population and its effectiveness is also evidenced. For people living at distant places and find navigating difficult, and for people who have trouble with face to face communication, this medium of providing service has proven to be beneficial.

Mental health is important than ever for the modern society because of the rate of impact and also there is a high need in re-educating both the youth and the adults of the today on the basis of impulsivity and aggression. Tele counselling is comparatively cost effective and flexible and has both advantages as well as disadvantages in addressing the needs of various sectors of society along with the various casual factors. The diagnosis is emphasized more than the course of treatment.

The most well established evidence comes in during the time of emergency when the patient is at their most vulnerable but tele-therapy reduced face-to-face human interaction, which was perceived as impersonal and unsuitable for new patient consultations. (Maleka, Matli et al., 2022). the entire process of psychotherapy has to be understood in order to sensitively evaluate the benefits and the barriers of telecounselling. The methods of counselling varies from culture to culture and from person to person and this methodological practises depends on a practitioner's belief and value systems and a general touch of psychological commonalities. However, the entire foundation that the whole system of psychotherapy is based on is a very delicately constructed one which emphasizes on the physical contact of both the counsellor as well as the client. There are many situations in which the individual needs to be remove form the environment which poses toxicity and hence, telecounselling is ineffective (Zhang, 2022).

There have also been cases of lack of privacy and security during online counselling (Young, 2005). In their own space and the same environment, it becomes encouraging for the client to be less docile and be at the receiving end. It cannot break their mindsets and the therapist also cannot be motivated to go further with the procedures. The inadequacy of understanding between the client and the therapist makes the whole process ineffective.

The formation of a solid rapport in which the client feels secure and docile in the company of a counsellor who provides this atmosphere is the first step in the therapeutic process. Psychological counselling is when a person engages with the deepest layers of the human psyche in order to help another person. This technique necessitates subject matter competence, an unbiased viewpoint from the therapist, and a bit of faith in otherworldly domains that can play a role in the individual's difficulties. The entire process is dependent on changes and fluctuations in this environment or energy field zone. Although online or telephone counselling can be beneficial, numerous studies have shown that it is ineffective.

Even if the individual separates oneself and changes their environment, they may still be unable to express their thoughts because a safe setting is not something they can produce for themselves. During a phone call or online video connection, the individual usually finds it difficult to trust the person, and hence effective therapy is insufficient. The main reason for the lack of trust is that the main element of eye contact is absent during a phone call or even video counselling. Because the client in need of assistance is not paying attention, the voice on the other end of the phone call becomes less trustworthy, and the process of unconditioning the client cannot take place during the phone call.

Just as science states that matter has an energy field, the same is true for living organisms that are encompassed by a powerful energy field. This energy field resonates one's thoughts and emotions, which is how everyone can "sense" a good or bad vibe. This has always been the foundation of the psychotherapy process.The client feels at ease when entering the safe zone of the psychotherapist or counsellor, and the therapist takes the place of the counsellor. This is where even residential counselling is ineffective because, unless the counsellor is equipped with a tremendous amount of energy, it becomes impossible to provide treatment elsewhere because the place where a person resides and uses the most carries a lot of that person's energy and this can easily be taken in by others and vice versa.

The process of transference, interpretation and counter transference also occurs in the energy fields. A person lets off more than what they let out, and this is clearly gets demonstrated with their emotional transference that occurs during therapy. The incongruence between their facial expression and verbal utterances and their body language and energies that they give says a whole lot about the intentions behind their actions. In the non-human species, the intention is what everything in survival is based on because this is what is felt, for example, the intent to kill. The same process of transference of intent occurs during psychotherapy as well. The client’s emotions are taken in by the therapist, who then understands the emotion and detaches from it and interprets the same to the client to provide them with a better understanding of themselves.

The psychotherapist's presence itself provides a space for the client to feel accepted and safe and hence, feels less threatened by the pressure of their disorders. There are a variety of settings in which tele counselling or online counselling many be effective as well as deficient. We will explore in detail, the different settings and the nature of their therapeutic transaction

**Gender and online counselling:** Women have always been known to benefit and approach counselors or a variety of their problem and find it effective as compared to men. (Ogrodniczuk, 2007), men avoid going to therapy mostly because of their self inflicted notions of gender roles as well as societal upbringing for them . there s also the superiority in men that they do not need help and can channelize the problems in their own lives. Even in tele counselling, it is always women who approach the treatment first. Women find greater comfort and readily accept treatment because of their readiness to change women also find it comfortable to have a female counselor.

**With younger children and adolescents:** children's movements majorly depend on their non-verbal communication cues rather than plain text. Also, it becomes excessively difficult to manage children diagnosed with attention deficits or hyperactivity or autism because there will be general non-adherence to the social situations. Children also require a suitable environment for their expression of emotions and hence there a multitude of assessments and therapeutic practises which help bring out the child’s inner state of feelings (Vernon and Schimmel, 2004). children also need to be in physical contact with a counselor and feel their warmth and safe presence for them to trust another person who is not their mother. The flow of thoughts in a child’s mind has to be captured accurately and this can be done with the counselor observing them in person. Children often times don’t feel connected easily and even if they do, the problems that they are undergoing cannot be expressed in verbal modes of communication. Even if they do get comfortable with a telecounsellor, chances of them getting overly attached and indistinct calling is very high.

Children these days are developing maturity at a greater speed and monitoring their flow of thoughts and their train of ideas becomes haphazard (Rimm, 2006). however, online therapy also can be beneficial in observing the child and their behaviour in the natural setting wherein the behavioural dysfunction occurs (Schueller, Stiles et al. 2017). The emphasis is laid on the appropriate implementation of the content specific programs and therapies in order to further the development of the child.

**With younger adults:**  A lot of younger adults these days take to online psychological testing without cross checking their validity and self diagnose themselves (Winnik , 1995) which can be dangerous because the age between 18 to 25 years is the period where identity is slowly developing and with the excessive labels the social media has been occupied with these days, it is no surprise that the smallest metal or cognitive fluctuations makes the children believe that their identity is superficial and search for an acceptable title elsewhere. Even with the minor mood fluctuations and temperaments, the younger adult affirms to themselves that they are depressed or have anxiety issues. Psychological disorders which were once considered as a stigma have now become a popular sympathetic trend by which the generation is pre-occupied with their temporary state of mind. It becomes important for the therapist to distinguish between real and fictitious disorders and provide the appropriate treatment for them.

The sensitivity rate of these young adults is also sky rocketing because they over sympathize with themselves due to the influence of media and hence, virtual counselling can help them, unless they seek help. Certain problems can only be discussed with the actual presence of the therapist, if the treatment has to be effective. The stigma these days is reducing and there are many younger adults coming in for therapy , however, the temporary relief that ill be provided in virtual messages cannot improve their overall life satisfaction. There is also the need for the right choosing of the tele counselor because of the cultural disparities that exist between the west an the east. Children in the est who approach a western psychologist will find most of their behaviour as acceptable devoiding them of the cultural norms.

**With older population:**  studies ave actually proven the benefits of online counselling for older population because the depressive and anxiety disorders that the older population face usually is the consequence of isolation and lack of social support (Murray, Banerjee et al., 2006). Hence, older people find solace with telecounselling for the elevation of their mood. Since older people cannot commute to far distances and find it flexible to seek counselling at their comfort places online counselling has proven to be beneficial for them. It is however, difficult to change the fixed mindsets that the older people come to counselling with, however, it can be seen as a cathartic release for them in which they find an unbiased individual to listen to their narrations. Older people merely wish to express their old tales and have a need to pass on to the next generation what they know and with telecounselling, this becomes a good platform to do so and this substantially improves their quality of life and making them self-reliant emotionally and reduces the burden of having someone to mentally depend on (Blaschke et al., 2009). however, minor issues regarding the age related impairments such as visual and auditory maladjustment makes the use of these technologies difficult (Liu et al., 2016)

**With urban/rural population:** Studies have shown that the depression rate is slightly high in the rural population due to the poorer socioeconomic conditions, lesser education in higher mortality rates and high use of tobacco and alcohol. There is also a cyclic repetition of unemployment due to lack of education and finding comfort in alcohol and tobacco and poorer mental health and higher rates of mortality. The lack of education amongst the rural people makes it difficult for both the counselor as well as the client to give and seek respectively. The rural clients, however, also accept the solutions provided more readily and implement it when compared to the urban population. Tele counseling is beneficial in providing both occupational therapy and health advice which can prove to be beneficial in curbing the unnecessary habits and hep them live much healthier lives (Betts et al., 2020). the counselors can also help women by making them more aware of their hygiene and mental health. Family and group therapy is also provided wherein they are give genetic counselling as well as family planning strategies.

**Conclusion:**

Tele counselling has both advantages and disadvantages, and it is especially advantageous to rural and elderly communities. This, however, can only be used as a short-term strategy and in pandemic and other emergency scenarios, not for general treatment. It is suggested that a counsellor be stationed in schools, villages, and old age homes to provide assistance as needed. Teletherapy can help persons suffering from social anxiety and other phobias. It can, however, be used to provide both follow-up and immediate feedback.

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