

APPNA Telemedicine Project: Healing from a distance  
G. Naheed Usmani, MD

Mission: To improve health care quality and access to specialist medical care in Pakistan

Goals and Objectives: To set up Internet based consultations between specialists in USA and referring doctors from Pakistan in order to improve patient care through recommendations for latest treatments and timely access to specialist knowledge. This will also update Pakistani physicians on the principles of evidence-based medicine as practiced in USA

APPNA has an Internet based Telemedicine initiative where physicians in Pakistan could discuss complicated patients with specialists in USA operational since Jan' 2016.

- The system utilizes a store and forward methodology on a password protected secure website that is closed to open access.
- All communication is physician-to-physician only: the requesting physician in Pakistan and the US specialist will have access to the emails generated back and forth on the cases they discuss.
- A physician in Pakistan uses the secure website to request a consultation detailing out the particulars of the case. There is ability to upload images and attachments.
- The US consultant receives an email notification about a pending case that he/she can access from a computer or a smart phone.
- A medical record is created on the website with all multispecialty conversations saved about that patient.
- US consultants have access to all the cases they gave advice on.

In the last one year, second opinion was sought in more than 125 cases, mostly from CDRS Swat Mother and Child Health Center. The specialties most needed were Dermatology, Diabetes, Obstetrics, Infectious Disease and Cardiology. 73% of our consultants responded to the requested consults. Physicians in Swat have found this resource very valuable. We will soon be extending these services to the Gujrat Cleft Hospital. We need to recruit more US physicians in all different specialties and hope that many APPNA members will volunteer. If you are interested, visit <http://appna.org/telemedicine-project/> and register as a consultant.

Looking forward to working with many of you.

G. Naheed Usmani, MD  
Chair

Members:  
Shahzad Iqbal, MD  
Mujeeb Shad, MD  
Khalil Khatri, MD  
Mustafa Saad Siddiqui, MD