

Future Technology

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The Future :

[The post-Covid world will be radically different from the near past. Especially in Medical Science, there will be a lot of changes. There will be a lot more use of technology for diagnostic, therapeutic and also, communication purposes. This new section, started from December 2020, will highlight these new technologies for the busy physician.]

Video Calling :

After Telemedicine became legal in India in March 2020, there has been an increasing trend in the use of video consultation for medical purposes. Thus, the physician of tomorrow must be adept in the use of video calling technology. This is now used not only for patient consultation, but also in medical teaching. In fact, throughout 2020, in all medical colleges of India, all classes and seminars were held through video calls only. Many multi-speaker national conferences were also held via this medium. Slowly, people have become used to this technology and it is highly likely that in the post-Covid world, this trend will continue.

There are a lot of video calling Apps. Some are free while others require subscription.

1. Zoom : This is one of the most popular Apps. There are free and paid versions. The free version allows meetings up to 40 minutes. The paid versions allow more participants and much more meeting hours. Usually, the host of the meeting will create a meeting ID (called raising) and send the id and password to other participants. Everyone else can join using those credentials. Sometimes an e-mail/Whatsapp link is sent and just clicking on the link will take you to the live meeting.

2. WhatsApp video call : We are sure that all readers of this article use WhastApp and also know how to use the video calling feature. As of now (Dec, 2020) up to 8 participants are allowed in one call. There is no limit on time and it is completely free. This is good for tele-consultations but not good for lecture classes.

3. Google Meet : This is free for 100 participants up to 60 minutes. Anyone with a Google account (which we are sure all of our readers have anyway) can start a Google Meet meeting. The link can be sent to the participants.

4. Microsoft Teams : This has free and paid versions. For the free version, up to 100 people can join and meeting can be up to 60 minutes. The paid versions allow much more flexibility. This App also allows cloud storage.

5. Facetime : This is the inbuilt App for iPhone users. Maximum users: 32

6. Facebook Messenger : This also allows up to 50 users and unlimited time. But it would be unadvisable to use it for official purposes.

Most of the Apps used here are extremely easy to use. To join a meeting, one just needs to download the App and type in the passcodes. To be a host, we need to create accounts (like any other social media website). One needs to have high-speed internet connection for these Apps.

Etiquettes for video calling : —

- During a video calling session, we should remember that it is a public event. Thus our dress (even if we are at home) should be as required for a formal meeting
- When one attendee is speaking, others should keep their devices in the “mute” mode
- The backdrop of the speaker should be such that no domestic details (like someone doing domestic chores) are unnecessarily revealed
- Video calls are mostly taking place from home. But the attendees have to make sure that other family members are not creating distractions. If needed, keep the video mode “off”.
- It is rude to leave midway during a speech.
- It must be remembered that when “screen sharing” option is used, the home screen of the device becomes public. Thus, it must be ensured that the home screen does not contain any offensive images or personal details.
- For those who will be doing regular video lecture sessions, it may be advisable to have a corner of the home or clinic decorated to look “official”.
- A person may have some objects or pictures at home which may be offensive to some other people. Such artefacts should never be in the backdrop during the video call.
- The “chat” feature of video calling Apps are for relevant discussions only.