



'Doctor's Touch': An Outpatient Perspective

"Doc! Telemedicine may apparently be the best option in the middle of this COVID mayhem", said Mr. Z. as he briefly paused, "but the doctor's touch is priceless." These were the last words before our first virtual outpatient visit was over, but they left an indelible imprint on my mind. That day I felt supremely blessed to be part of this indisputably exalted profession.

The colossal structure of doctor-patient relationships erects on the pillars of infallible trust, irreproachable goodwill, and genuine honesty. This impeccable physician-patient bond could not have been more obvious than in the present testing times. As the entire human race is being plunged into the uncharted territory of inchoate danger by the seemingly inexorable pandemic, the medical community, in its entirety, has valiantly stepped into this battlefield as a savior of mankind in the truest sense of the phrase. The unprecedented crisis necessitated taking timely actions and redesigning our healthcare in a way that ensured continuity of care as well as adhering to the globally implemented social distancing guidelines and infection-mitigating measures. We witnessed a phenomenal transformation of our patient care structure as we ventured into virtualization of our health care. Within a span of weeks, the inauguration of telemedicine services enabled provision of the medical care at the patients' doorstep nationwide, helping to minimize exposure and contain the disease spread.

Even in the fields like cardiology, where outpatient visits are deemed incomplete without comprehensive physical examination, the road to telehealth implementation was smooth. From assessing jugular venous pressure to creating pretibial indentation with the thumb, cardiologists have always taken a pride in thoroughly evaluating their patients and interacting with them in-person. But when survival instincts kick in, innovation is a desideratum and change, inevitable. Therefore, the concept of virtual care has received a welcoming response from the cardiology world as well, as we all are convincingly

adapting to new norms in this era. Sitting in our office in front of the computer screen, we can still see patients who are sitting conveniently in their living rooms, still able to access their medical records, enter orders, adjust medications, formulate plans and make appropriate treatment decisions. The digital applications on smart phones have easily surmounted the ubiquitous technological barriers towards the adoption of virtual patient care. Amid all this, where everything seems to be fitting in well and going in the right direction, there is something being profoundly missed. A doctor's touch: the compassionate, gentle and healing touch.

This touch is as relevant in today's medicine as it was in the ancient therapeutic landscape. On one hand where it works as an initial and reliable diagnostic tool, on the other hand it caters to the emotional quotient of the patients and provides the best mechanism to build a strong rapport. As we are fighting this pandemic together and aiming for a new epoch, we are undergoing a process of reshaping our future and simultaneously our healthcare. And as we have collectively embarked on this journey, I just hope that I do not wake up one day, realizing that we have left behind one of our greatest assets: the doctor's touch.

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Humans of Cardiology is an opportunity for PaACC members to share motivating stories about their personal and professional lives and was inspired by the wildly popular Humans of New York series. These stories showcase the compassion shown, as well as the hardships and triumphs members go through, as medical professionals. Our goal is to connect our members via these posts and reveal the uniqueness of our field through testimonials from our community. To submit your story, [click here](#).

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