

# Growth in use of telemedicine seen from 2005 to 2017

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(HealthDay)—From 2005 to 2017, there was a substantial increase in

telemedicine use, although use was still uncommon in 2017, according to a research letter published online Nov. 27 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Michael L. Barnett, M.D., from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, and colleagues examined trends in telemedicine use and its association with regional factors using 2005 to 2017 data from OptumLabs Data Warehouse.

The researchers identified 383,565 telemedicine visits by 217,851 patients from 2005 to 2017. Most users were female (63 percent) and resided in [urban areas](#) (83.3 percent). An increase was noted in annual telemedicine visits among all members, with average annual compound growth rates of 52 and 261 percent from 2005 to 2014 and from 2015 to 2017, respectively. Overall, most telemedicine visits were either telemental health or primary care telemedicine (53 and 39 percent, respectively). Before 2016, primary care telemedicine visits increased 36 percent annually, then increased to 136,366 visits in 2017; telemental health increased 56 percent annually to 57,095 visits in 2017. Counties with no psychiatrists had a significantly faster increase in use of telemental health, while growth of primary care telemedicine was not linked to supply of [primary care physicians](#).

"This [evidence](#) suggests that local coverage and reimbursement regulations may have influenced growth of telemental care but not primary care [telemedicine](#)," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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