

## **Need – Assessment**

Need assessment is critical because that will decide which technology to use and where to install. It is a critical factor in making telemedicine successful. The challenge today is not just to overcome technology barriers. Rather the challenge is why, where and how to implement, which technology and at what cost.

We have to consider the following main areas to access need for a telemedicine system.

- I. Clinical Need Assessment
- II. Financial Consideration
- III. Technical Need Assessment

### **I. Clinical Need Assessment:**

Important parameters for clinical need assessment:

- To identify the clinical service area
- To determine healthcare services offered

This is the first and foremost important need assessment which requires clinical staff attention. We have to consider "What does this patient community lack that can be resolved by telemedicine? If some region has typical cases of a particular disease, then the planned telemedicine must offer the solution for the same. Otherwise, there are chances that the telemedicine service may be beneficial only to the small number of people.

### **II. Financial Consideration:**

Program planner must consider the economical perspective of need assessment. Besides the costs of main parameters like telemedicine equipment and communication the planner must consider other associated costs.

Important parameters for financial consideration:

- Telemedicine software cost
- Computer system cost
- Medical equipments cost
- Communication cost

The cost includes initial cost, recurring cost, maintenance cost and up-gradation cost.

Other parameters:

- Human resource expenses
- Installation and implementation cost
- Office rent
- Consumables cost
- Royalty/licensing cost
- Training cost
- Miscellaneous cost

### **III. Technical Need assessment:**

Technical requirements and resources need to be considered before setting up telemedicine services. We have to identify which existing equipment(s) can be used and which are required to be purchased. The telemedicine software must be simple and easy to use.

The system developed or purchased must have compatibility with its earlier versions. It is recommended to consider the underlying technology keeping future expansion in mind, which includes number of centers, bandwidth increment, other communication options etc.

Important parameters for technical need assessment:

- Types of Information (Medical data)
- Total quality of information
- Speed of information transfer

System Flexibility also gives cost benefits. For instance, our Tele Doctor - Telemedicine System provides user with multiple communication options which helps in cutting the cost of communication and thus reduces over all recurring cost.