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Letter to the editor

# Telemedicine as an effective tool for dental service during COVID-19 pandemic



Dear Editor,

The definition of telemedicine by the World Health Organization is the use of information and communication technologies to improve patient outcomes by increasing access to care and medical information.<sup>1</sup> We read an interesting article in your journal about the status of dental telemedicine in Japan to bridge the gap between dental service and the population during COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Dental treatment is known as a bioaerosol generating procedure. It would be convenient as well as coordinated by telemedicine, especially during the lockdown period.

Recently, Lee et al.<sup>3</sup> reported that the phenomenon of reduction ratio for dental visits was found in Taiwan during COVID-19 outbreak. As the epidemic developed, telemedicine become an important tool in this critical period of limited face-to-face interaction to minimize the interruption and maintenance of dental services. Taiwan's National Health Insurance Administration approved the live-interactive and face-to-face module for patients in home isolation, home quarantine, and with chronic diseases.<sup>5</sup> Chung Shan Medical University Hospital has conducted the online video for dental services via Taiwan's National Health Insurance system. In addition, telemedicine was also the alternative option for domiciliary dental care.<sup>4</sup> This might improve oral health inequities, especially in the time of COVID-19 level 3 alert period.

Taken together, telemedicine seems to be a reliable, acceptable, and effective tool for providing dental service (mainly in diagnosis, monitoring, and instruction) at distance during COVID-19 pandemic. However, some dental diseases still need to be further treated and followed up after telemedicine. It is still a challenge but is a correct direction to use telemedicine in dental services.

## Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest relevant to this article.

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