What is telemedicine and what can it do?3,4

Telemedicine is the long-distance exchange of medical information from one site to another via electronic communications to improve patients’ health status. It has expanded since its conception in the 1960s to include:

Telemedicine in practice3,4,7,8

The ECHO project
- Rural and underserved populations in New Mexico
- No difference in SVR rates between telemedicine patients and those receiving face-to-face consultations
- Programme expanded to Utah, Arizona and the Department of Veterans Affairs

The JAILFREE-C programme
- Patients in El Dueso prison, Spain
- HCV-viraemia prevalence dropped from 10% to 0%
- Overall savings of €578 per patient
- High satisfaction level for inmates

Telemedicine in a connected health ecosystem3,4-7

Telemedicine is part of a fully digital healthcare system.

Benefits5,6

- Cost-effective
- Reduces travel time while increasing flexibility
- Improves communication among clinicians

Challenges4,7

- Cannot be used to replace care in all settings and situations
- Potential issues with access and security data
- Potential challenges with funding

Cost-effective
Convenient for patients and caregivers
Increases access to care

Telemedicine is part of a connected health ecosystem3,4-7

Telemedicine can be expanded to telehealth and connected health, as part of a fully digital healthcare system.

Taking telemedicine further

Telemedicine is recommended by EASL and AASLD as part of the response to COVID-191,2

To reduce travel, limit in-person visits to specialised centres and minimise exposure to medical staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is advised that care for patients with liver disease should be maintained wherever possible/required by using telemedicine or visits by phone

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Acknowledgements
Gilead Sciences would like to thank Dr Miguel Mateo (Centro de Inserción Social José del Hierro, Santander, Spain) for his advice and review of this infographic (pro-bono)

*This infographic has been developed and funded by Gilead Sciences Europe Ltd*

Date of preparation: June 2020, D101-LVD-2020-05-0018. © Gilead Sciences Europe Ltd