"Social media will play an effective role to disseminate telehealth"

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Q: How can increased utilization of telehealth tools transform healthcare affordability in India?

India is a huge country both in terms of size and population. Reasons that contribute to both increased costs and delivery are healthcare infrastructure costs, very busy urban life, increased commuting time in metropolitans for both Providers and clients, limited time of availability of providers to say a few.

Availability of Physicians is seven per 10,000 of population (in 2013, source: who.org) compared to 30 plus per 10,000 in developed nations. Mental healthcare providers' situation is more than worst in terms of availability. There were 3 Psychiatrists per 10 lakh population and around five Psychologists per 1 crore population in 2011 (source: Mental Health Atlas 2011 - Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, World Health Organization). This makes the availability of professionals limited to the most demanding and high paying locations, leaving the rest of the locations un-served. With more than 50 percent of the population still dwelling in villages, there is an acute shortage of basic healthcare and Mental Healthcare services and facilities.

Q: How can it play a role in healthcare delivery?

Telehealth tools bridge the big gap of unavailability of these services at locations that are un-served or under-served, along with providing the urban population solution against time-crunch and commuting, and in mental healthcare vicinity beating the

stigma and hesitation to take the first step. Telehealth tools also help in educating people and taking self motivated steps towards solutions as well as helping others. Through telehealth tools global experts and professionals sitting in other countries can make their services available in India. Due to lesser investments in infrastructure and real estate and running expenses, the cost of delivery of tele-healthcare is much lesser and flexi-work conditions for providers reduces the cost of services for the end client as well, along with many self help resources and tools being available free of cost on the telehealth portals these days.

Q: Are health firms now getting social media savvy to improve their presence? What are the possible benefits and negative points if any?

Social Media platforms have become information platforms as well, where people reach out for gathering basic knowledge, client experience, discussing their problems/needs and getting feedback about different products, companies and services. Thus, regularly reaching out to people on social media to inform, introduce and/or advertise the products or services, and to get and gather customer's feedback and experiences, has become one of the high priority task for all customer/client centric businesses.

The immense benefits of social media activities include, regular engagement of organization with client and of client with other users of product/services that increases the chances of longer associations among the two if the delivery is good. Clients also feel that organization cares about them and values their opinion thus making association stronger. Social media helps big time in getting real time feedback of the product and/or services.

Some negative points could be that Social Media messages that can please some population can annoy some others due to difference in opinion or cultural/religious context; false feedbacks by competitors can hurt or cyber bullying can affect the image of organization; unwanted criticism and feedback can deviate the focus or actions as well.

Having said that, the positives of engaging with the customers/clients/potential customers on social media far outweigh the negatives and a relevant social media presence is therefore necessary.

Q: How is your company responding to the new internet and social media requirements of healthcare providers and their clients?

On Client End: Our company, ePsyClinic.com is providing world class holistic tele-mental health technology solution to clients, i.e. providing user friendly user interface, privacy and any place accessibility to providers through video, audio, text or telephonic consultation technology, easy booking and payments, to providing them right self help resources for free, free automated assessments, online planners assigned by providers that can be accessed anywhere anytime, and also easy regular communication with the experts. We also provide clients 24*7 guidance on how to reach out to the right provider and helping them in using the technology for their best benefits.

On Provider End: Our company gives in-house training to providers for delivering best services through internet based communication mediums, which is not easy due to such mediums being impersonal. We also provide them technology training and assistance in maintaining regular communication with clients, in private and safe tech environment.

On Social Media: We have one of the most alive social media presence within mental health care ecosystem. We actively engage with the larger audience through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter. We share multiple free and helpful resources, useful tips on daily basis. We also receive feedback to improve upon our services. We are consistently looking out for new social media platforms and innovative content to engage and capture the imagination of the larger pool of audience.