

Current Legal Status and Promotion of Telemedicine in Thailand: A Systematic Review

Introduction

Telemedicine has been introduced in Thailand for a while. However, little information is available regarding how telemedicine is regulated and how the government currently supports it. Furthermore, there is no systematic review that directly addresses Thai telemedicine law.

Objective

This study aimed to collect and review progress in the use of telemedicine and current Thai legislation to promote the use of telemedicine in Thailand.

Method

A systematic literature review was conducted in Scopus and PubMed. Inclusion criteria were English-written articles published in the period 2000-2022 in the fields of medicine, health professions, computer science, and social sciences with accessible full-text. This study followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines 2020. The legal status and present situation of telemedicine in Thailand were also analyzed.

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Result

A total of 4,796 records were identified after the initial search (Scopus 1,468 and PubMed 3,328). Twenty-six full-text articles fulfilled eligibility criteria, including the current Thai legislation. The results revealed that telemedicine was a potential strategy for healthcare delivery. Nonetheless, in Thailand it was still poorly developed and regulated. These studies suggest that 5 major factors need to be considered when promoting telemedicine as follows: cost effectiveness, information and communication technology (ICT) development, patient perception, health insurance coverage, and public-private sector partnership.

Conclusion

Telemedicine is an effective tool to deliver remote healthcare to patients. However, under the current situation, Thai legislation remains incomprehensible and unclear. Reviewing, updating, and implementing legislation and policies should be targeted to promote telemedicine in Thailand.

Key Words

Telemedicine, Thailand, Legislation, Current situation, Promotion