

EDITORIAL



Dear colleagues,

All of us this year found ourselves in a completely new reality. We have to cope with the outbreak of COVID-19. Health care systems in many countries proved to be not ready for a pandemic. This costed patients and doctors their lives.

Let me thank, on behalf of the Editorial Board, all doctors that have risked their lives and have rescued and are going on to rescue lives of their patients.

Today, in many countries, despite surge in coronavirus cases, the restrictions are eased and life is returning to normal. However, we understand that the world has changed and we still have to live with restrictions. In particular, we have to limit physical contact and communication, whereas the educational process has been transferred online by using video, smartphones and social networks.

This occurs not only as a result of the pandemic but it reflects the spirit of the time: life and business are becoming more digital. Medicine is one of the fields, where the potential of digitalization has already been used widely. For instance, Digital Supply Act adopted in Germany on Dec. 19, 2019 enables to render a series of measures such as health apps, digital medical reports and online consultations.

Many patients have already started to use health apps, for instance, for timely intake of medications or monitoring blood sugar levels. Doctors are allowed to prescribe medications using smartphone applications.

The Act foresees many other new applications for doctors and patients. Doctors will get initial funding for conducting video consultations with patients. It should promote a further extension of the online services. The services of distant consulting are provided for home care patients and are paid from non-budget sources. To implement this, doctors can place corresponding offers on their websites.

Of course, such form of medical services cannot fully substitute physical connection between doctor and patient but may significantly improve the consultant-patient relationship. Besides, deeper knowledge of different formats and online methods is therefore required.

We should evaluate the experience we are living through today as a lesson that is not only going to transform our future. It is a lesson that accelerates digital transformation in medicine and dramatically changes the forms of rendering medical services in future.

Yours,

Editor-in-Chief
Dr. Georg Tyminski