The Determinants of the Use of Telemedicine in Senegal

Introduction

In Senegal, as in many countries, physicians are unevenly distributed. This situation leads to health inequalities. Telemedicine is considered to be a good solution, but it is still underused in health facilities.

Objective

This study aimed to identify the individual (micro) and contextual (meso and macro) factors that influence the use of telemedicine in Senegal.

Method

The study involved a descriptive qualitative study and a cross-sectional quantitative study. It included physicians working in public hospitals, those working in district health centres, and telemedicine projects managers. Qualitative data was collected through individual interviews, transcribed and imported into NVivo 10 where they were coded thematically. Quantitative data was collected by administering questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS 23.

Results

The results showed that telemedicine could contribute to, but could not guarantee the recruitment and retention of physicians in underserved areas. They indicate that physicians have both positive and negative behavioural, normative and control beliefs influencing their use of telemedicine and that their intention is moderate and influenced by their perceived behavioural control. The results also demonstrate that many contextual meso (technical, organizational and ethical) and macro (financial, political, legal and socioeconomic) factors can influence their use of telemedicine.

Conclusion

The results of this study can inform the choice of telemedicine development strategies. These strategies can help to promote the use of telemedicine in Senegal, which in turn can help to increase physician recruitment and retention in underserved areas, resulting in better access to healthcare and, and as a result improved population health.