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Telemedicine and M-Health in Hypertension Management: Technologies, Applications and Clinical Evidence.

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Electronic processes and communication technologies are more and more often employed to provide healthcare services to caregivers and their patients. Such solutions are currently referred as e-health, the most popular and widely distributed being those based on telemedicine and mobile health (m-health). A specific application of telemedicine for hypertension management is blood pressure telemonitoring (BPT), which allows remote data transmission of BP and additional information on patients' health status from their living site or from a community setting to the doctor's office or the hospital. Several randomized studies have documented a significant BP reduction with regular BPT compared to usual care, particularly in high risk hypertensive patients. Additional benefits are observed when BPT is offered under the supervision of a team of healthcare professionals, including a community pharmacist. BPT may also be provided in the context of m-health solutions, which commonly include wireless diagnostic and clinical decision support tools. M-health has the potential to promote patient's self-management, as a complement to the doctor's intervention, and encourage greater participation in medical decision making. Current statistics show that half of smartphone owners gather health information through their phone and 19 % use a health app. In case of hypertensive patients the most popular apps are those with tracking function, including BPT. Thus, e-health, and in particular BPT and m-health, are progressively gaining a key role in the management of hypertensive patients, having the potential to improve the quality of the delivered care and to more effectively prevent cardiovascular consequences of high BP.

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