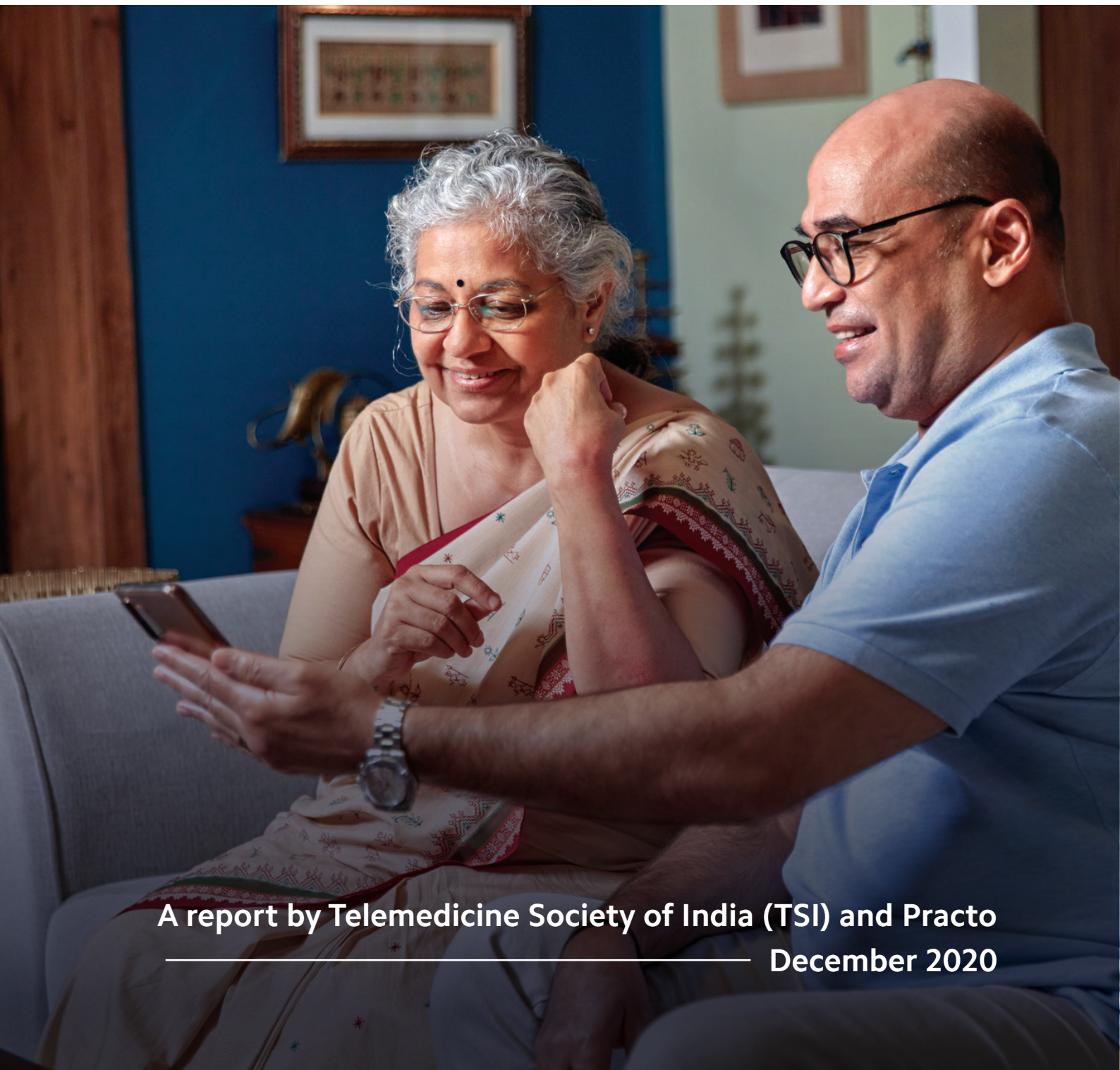


# Reinventing Healthcare Delivery With Telemedicine



A report by Telemedicine Society of India (TSI) and Practo  
December 2020

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# Foreword

**Maj Gen. (Dr.) Ashok K Singh (Retd.), President, Telemedicine Society of India (TSI)**

Voltaire once said, “The art of medicine consists of amusing the patient while nature cures the disease.” Taking a leaf out of his book, it will not be incorrect to state that when technology finds effective ways to deliver and foster healthcare right to the doorstep of patients, it is but amusing. As a society, the Telemedicine Society of India has always been the forerunner in bringing together stakeholders in the ecosystem to engage, interact and deliberate on the way forward for digital healthcare.

As a collective, when the Government notified the Telemedicine Practice Guidelines (TPG) this year and with the pandemic staring us in the face, it came as a reprieve. Owing to the TPG, the practice of telemedicine got the necessary fillip and ushered in renewed acceptability amongst caregivers and patients.

**This paper briefly outlines the gap, the growth, and the potential of the healthcare delivery system in the country.** It also brings to the fore the way in which this regulatory boost, and the unfortunate onslaught of the pandemic, has brought about some fundamental changes in the social perception of the practice of telemedicine.

**I implore you to go through this report to get an overview of how the current healthcare ecosystem is witnessing a revamp in the way it reaches out to the public, and how it augments the accessibility, and affordability of continuity of care.** Overcoming the gaps, our healthcare system has surpassed expectations, and this realization has been brought upon by renewed faith in the practice of telemedicine.

***“The current healthcare ecosystem is witnessing a revamp in how it augments the accessibility and affordability of continuity of care”***



# Note to readers

**Shashank ND, CEO & Co-Founder, Practo**

As active participants in India's digital healthcare ecosystem, we are delighted to share our insights on where the country currently stands on the adoption of telemedicine, the reasons behind its meteoric rise amid the pandemic, and the advantages it can continue to offer in a post-COVID world.

Our objective with this report **is to ignite thought-provoking and meaningful discussions around telemedicine** in the Indian context, as a critical first step towards promoting and establishing more collaborations among disparate stakeholders, tied by their commitment to one industry.

Backed by external data and supported by insights culled from the experience of crores of Indians who used Practo between March and November this year, this report provides valuable information and factual evidence for all stakeholders of the healthcare ecosystem seeking to understand the impact of telemedicine in India. There has been a 3x increase in the number of people using online consultations, while in-person appointments have reduced by **32%** in this period. What is more, this growth is registered across demographic groups, geographies, and specialties.

Despite telemedicine increasing efficiencies for both patients as well as doctors, **it is still at a nascent stage in India** where it can only play a supplementary role in mainstream healthcare practices. Furthermore, **with more clarity on regulation and guidelines required**, not only to further enhance telehealth services, but also ensure that **data protection and privacy issues are appropriately dealt with**, there is much left to be explored when it comes to telemedicine in India.

Our endeavor is to provide a comprehensive overview of these developments by taking unique use cases since the outbreak, the outcome of all of which has been one - **the adoption of telemedicine practices**. With that, we hope you find value in what we have attempted to examine in this report and use it to positively influence and improve India's healthcare ecosystem.

***"While there has been a 3x increase in online consultations, in-person appointments have reduced by 32%"***



# Introduction

When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, the world's healthcare system experienced something it had not planned or prepared for. Stretched beyond their capacity and necessitated by strict social distancing protocols, even the most advanced medical establishments in the world were unable to support patients at a time when high-quality clinical care was critically sought.

At a time like this, **telemedicine emerged as the elixir that not only revived healthcare delivery systems to improve patient care, but also ignited deep-seated behavioral changes** among people that led them to embrace innovation in healthcare.

Buttressed by the removal of regulatory barriers with the release of the telemedicine practice guidelines early this year, the COVID-19 pandemic saw increased acceptance among people to both render as well as receive healthcare services through secure, virtual channels as a way to ensure continuity of care while limiting exposure to the virus.

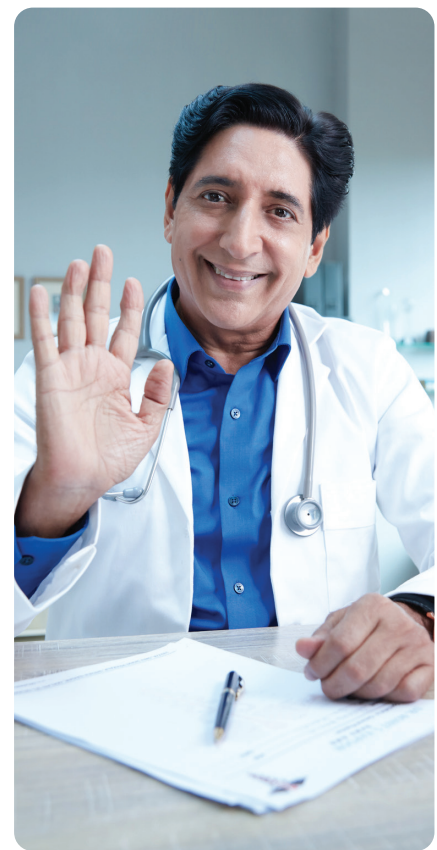
Advocated by organizations like the CDC and the WHO, telemedicine was leveraged to triage health issues and evaluate suspected cases of COVID-19, while minimizing the need for affected individuals to go to healthcare facilities in person. What makes this development even more remarkable is its **potential to make healthcare systems more agile in a post-COVID-19 world as well.**

The World Health Organization (WHO) prescribes a doctor-patient ratio of 1:1000, but in India, it is around 0.7:1000. Moreover, in about six lakh villages, where 70% of India's population lives, the number of doctors is only a fourth of those in urban areas.

***The World Health Organization (WHO) prescribes a doctor-patient ratio of 1:1000; in India, it is around 0.7:1000***

In that sense, the ongoing crisis has provided the necessary push for healthcare institutions, lawmakers, regulatory bodies as well as consumers to turn to alternative ways of providing and consuming healthcare. In fact, a report by The American Journal of Managed Care states that recent events could promulgate further measures to facilitate more widespread adoption of telemedicine solutions.

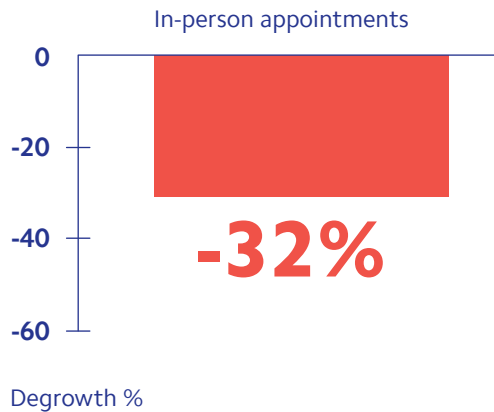
A step in the right direction in **offering better patient outcomes by empowering them with a single touchpoint for high-quality healthcare services**. Thus, by improving convenience and access to care - all while building a more efficient healthcare system - telemedicine has shaken the foundation of healthcare by not only **supplementing an already burdened healthcare system, but also by giving patients greater ownership over their care.**



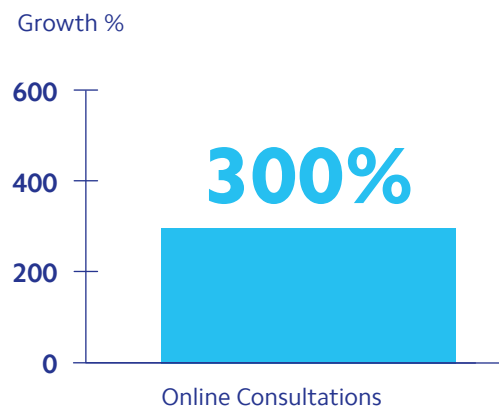
# Rise of telemedicine since the outbreak of COVID-19

Based on transactions by crores of Indians between March 2020 - November 2020

## Degrowth of users for in-person appointments: -32%

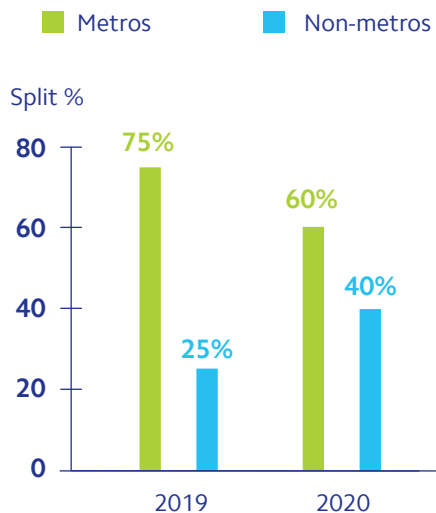


## Growth of users for online consultations: 300%



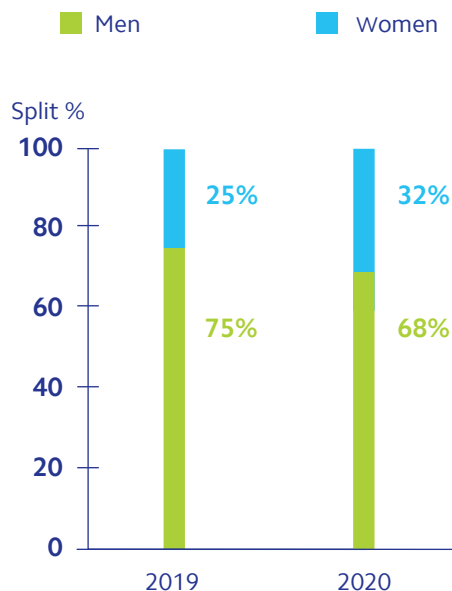
## Tracing the growth in users for online consultations

### Metro vs non-metro users



Among **metros**, Bengaluru, Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, and Kolkata grew by more than **300%** as compared to last year

### Men vs women users

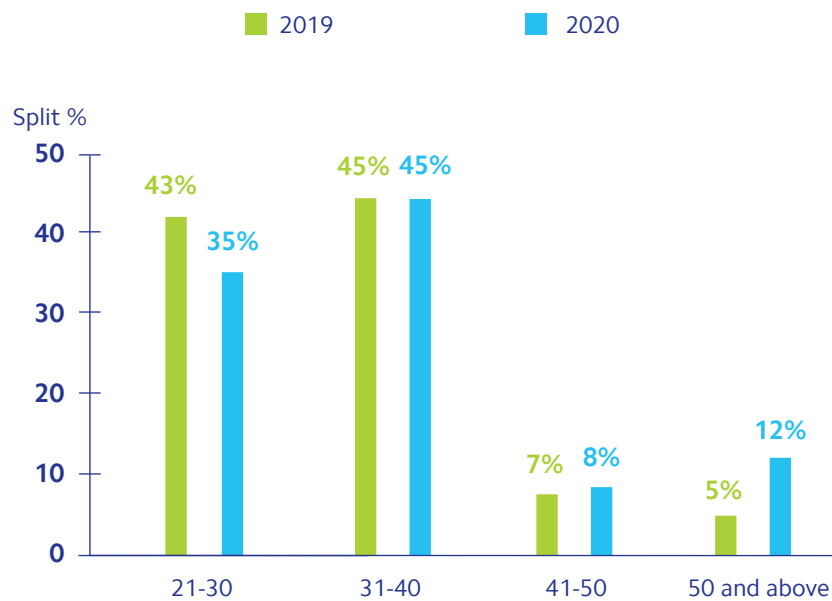


**Gynaecologists and General Physicians** were two of the most consulted specialists by **women** in 2020



## Tracing the growth in users for online consultations

### Across different age groups

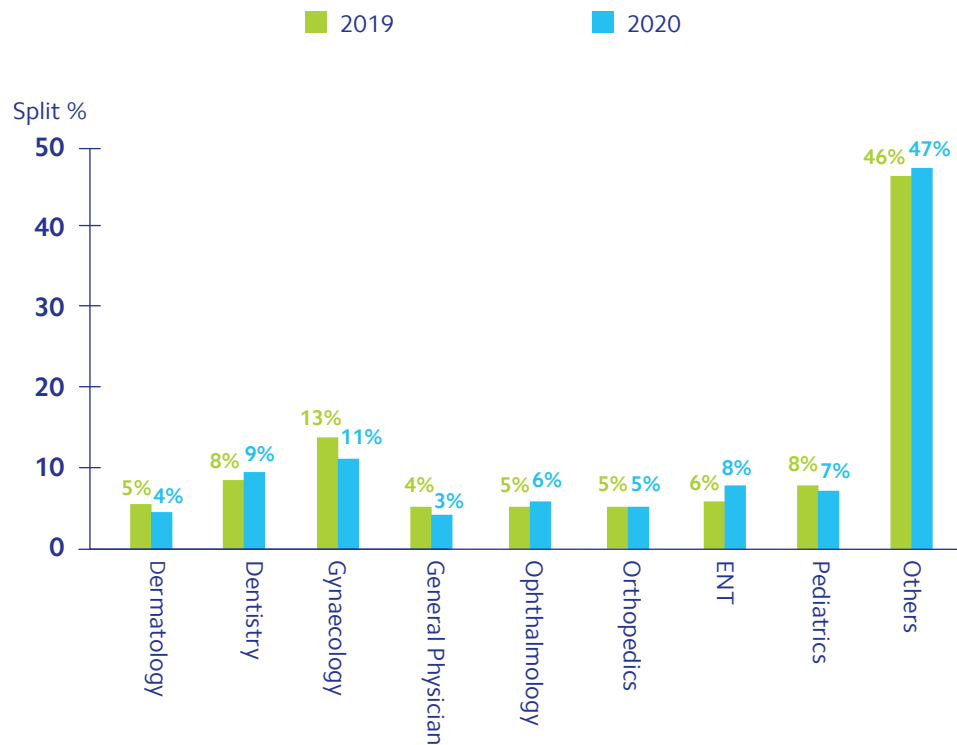


There's been a **5x growth** in online consultations by people aged 50 and above, compared to the same period last year

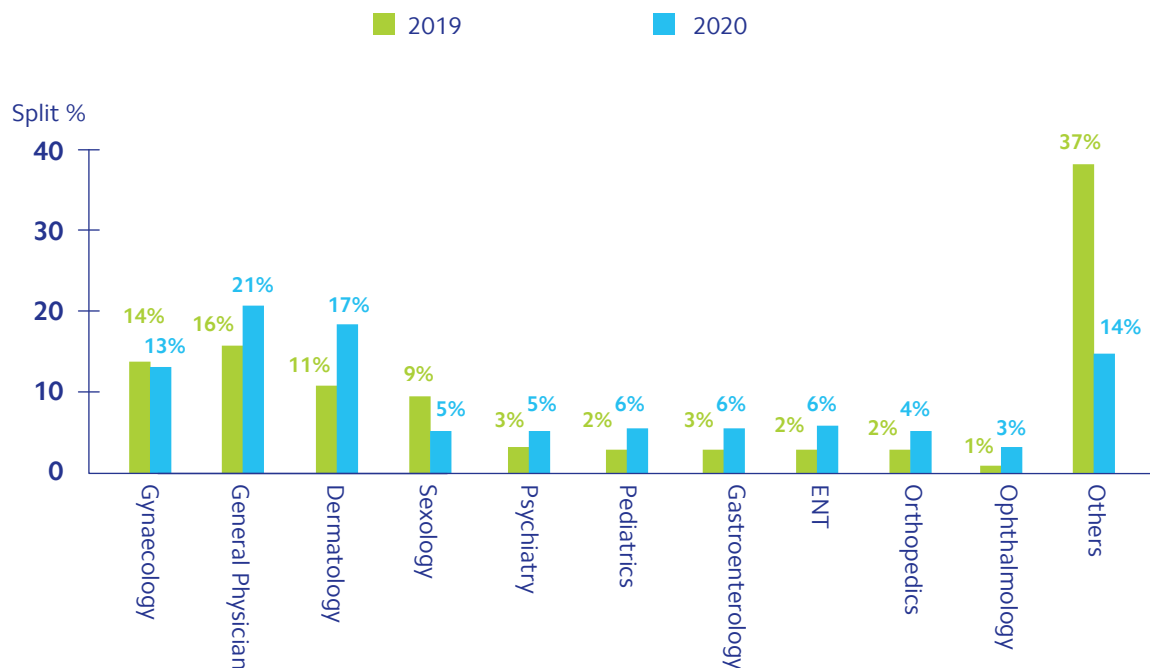


## Top consulted specialties

### In-person appointments



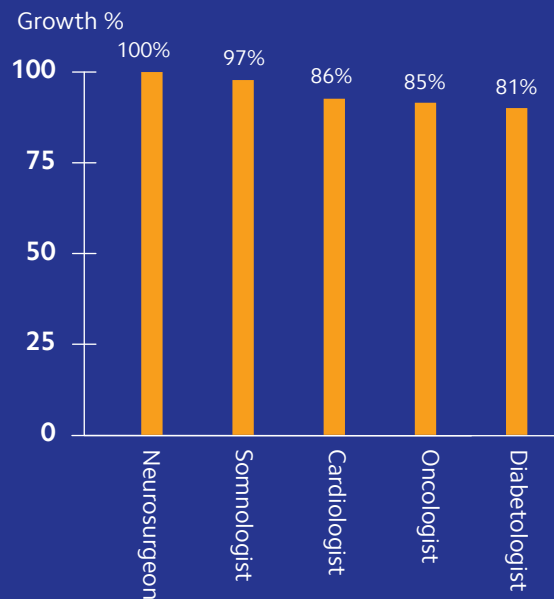
### Online consultations



We see a dip in in-person appointments for **GP & Dermatology** this year as online consultations for these specialties grew

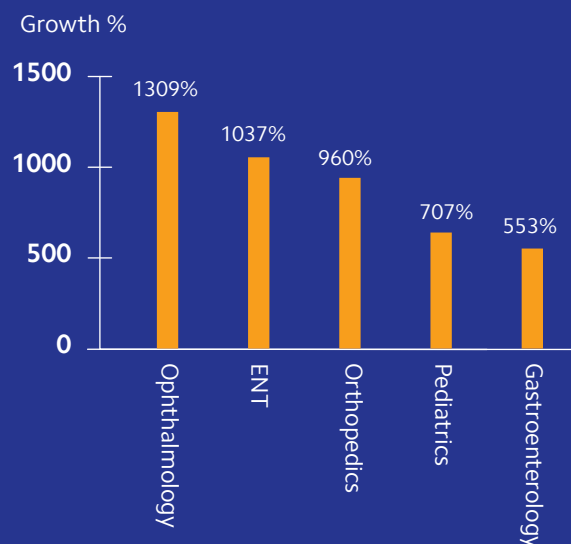
## Fastest rising healthcare concerns

### In-person appointments



Visits to **secondary care specialists** grew dramatically between March 2020 - November 2020

### Online consultations



“

*I had my first telemedicine experience today. I am not going back to seeing a doctor face-to-face unless a physical examination is required. This is super convenient. #Telemedicine.*

- \*Ankit | 30-35 years (\*name changed)



## Most discussed health topics in online consultations across different age groups

Age groups

**21-30**

- Eye redness
- PCOD
- Skin problems
- Fever
- Anxiety

**31-40**

- Hair fall problems
- Acidity
- Pregnancy
- Toothache
- Sexual problems
- Vaccination for children

**41-50**

- Weight loss
- Chest pain
- Lower back pain
- Menopause
- Depression

**51-60**

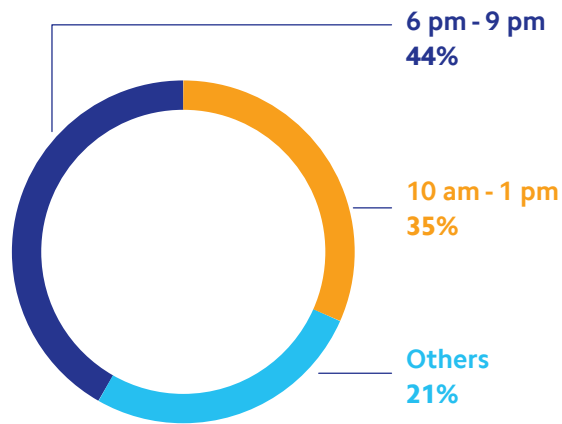
- Breathing problems
- Hearing loss
- Skin allergy
- Gastric problems
- Weight gain

**> 60**

- Heart problems
- Respiratory problems
- Panic attacks
- Eczema

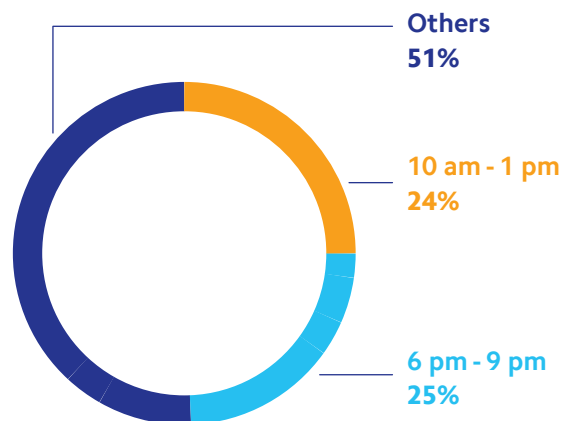
## Preferred day(s) and time to consult a doctor

### In-person appointments



Monday, Saturday, Sunday

### Online consultations



Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday



*I took a video consultation with an extremely popular doctor today, who otherwise would've struggled to share a half-an-hour slot. But today, it was super easy. I booked a video slot in the morning, he was absolutely on time to get on the call and in 10 minutes, I had the prescription on my phone!*

- Anita\* | 30-35 years (\*name changed)



# Unique use cases and how they emerged during the pandemic

## Increased access to high-quality care for users in T2 cities

With lack of access to good, quality care, a reality in several smaller towns in India, telemedicine enabled them to access better healthcare services - anytime, anywhere - without the need to traverse long distances for consultations, or putting themselves at risk in the face of the ongoing crisis.

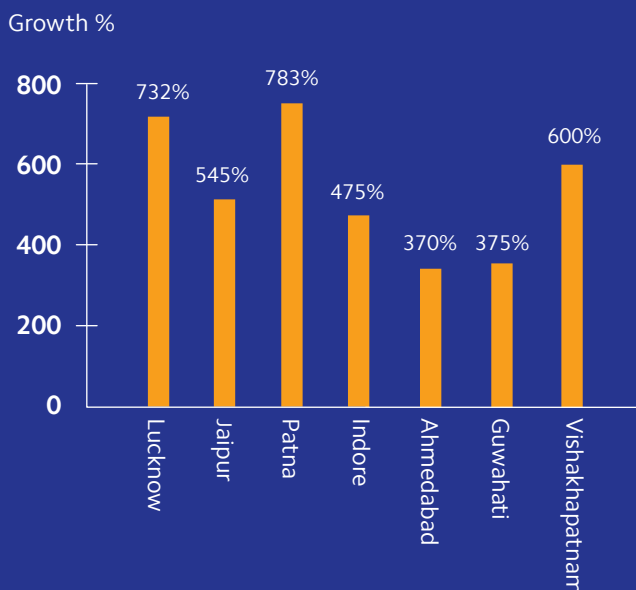
By opening access to quality healthcare and making it ubiquitous, cities like Manjeri, Arrah, Balasore, Etah, Orai, Khopoli, Jagtial and Shivpuri experienced telemedicine for the first time this year. **Tier 2 cities, in particular, saw high growth in online consultations to the tune of 7x, with several others like Meerut, Jammu, Srinagar, Nellore, Kochi, Gorakhpur, Kakinada, Tirupati, Bhagalpur, Gaya and Shimoga recording a growth of 10x.** This translates to a 750% growth for non-metro cities, whereas for metros, this percentage stood at 450.

## Greater access to mental health specialists

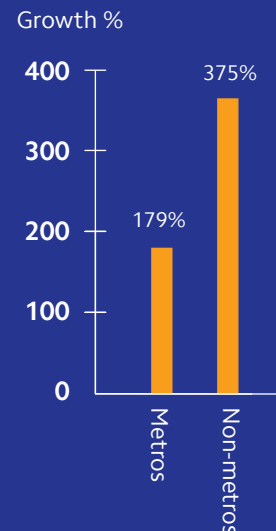
Amid a global pandemic and an economic slowdown, health and work-related pressure has been negatively impacting the mental health and well-being of many people. The stress of increased workload and general anxiety from isolation and loneliness, as people largely remained indoors, have led to a growth of 302% in online consultations for mental health-related queries during this time.

In this scenario, being able to effectively address these issues at an early stage with the help of telehealth solutions is a big boon. **This is important given that one in three consultations for mental health came from women.** What is more, the majority of the total patients were from Tier 2 cities in India.

### Fastest growing non-metro cities



### Growth in mental health-related queries



## Elderly getting used to technology

Even though young people are known to be more open to evolving telehealth practices, the COVID-19 pandemic has motivated elderly people to learn and expand their use of healthcare technologies. This is demonstrated by the **502% spike in online consultations from people above the age of 50 during this crisis.**

While reasons could be many, one of the key factors has been the realization and acceptance that adapting to new technology will help them navigate the modern world with relative ease. Moreover, with the pandemic leading to many facing loneliness and prolonged isolation, having access to help 24\*7 has been a big draw among older people.

## Increase in late-night consultations

With a majority of the country's workforce working remotely amid the pandemic, the lines between work and home life have become blurred. This has resulted in many working for long hours during the day, one of the reasons why **25% of online consultations have been recorded between 10 pm and 4 am when people are not burdened with work responsibilities.**

This may be one of the reasons why telehealth companies offer people the flexibility to seek medical help 24\*7. Furthermore, it is well-known that the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the sleep of many, who frequently face delayed or fragmented sleep. While a number of things could have led to this, these changes in sleep patterns have been attributed to conditions like anxiety and depression. **Not surprisingly, one of the top specialties consulted during late-night hours also happens to be mental health.**



# Factors contributing to this rise in telemedicine

Building access to mainstream healthcare services has been deeply explored in India. From mandatory posting of qualified doctors in remote locations to various government-led initiatives, much has been experimented with, but little accomplished.

This led many organizations like Telemedicine Society of India (TSI) and ISRO to advocate for innovation in healthcare for decades, calling for a well-connected and comprehensive health ecosystem with the introduction of telemedicine. **Although these efforts resulted in telemedicine practices taking various forms in India, what has changed only very recently is people's acceptance of it.**

Even as people enjoy the benefits of telemedicine today, making it mainstream was long-drawn-out. This could be due to multiple reasons. Radical change in behavior demanded from users - both patients as well as healthcare professionals - as well as lack of understanding of its benefits, top the charts. Trust is an important factor for wide-scale adoption of new, tech-enabled specialized care and although the pandemic provided the push necessary for consumers to embrace telemedicine, this behavioral change would have taken longer without the threat of COVID-19.

Combined with the fact that the industry itself is new and continues to battle unique challenges everyday - be it related to logistics, payments, or the technology itself - this becomes easier to comprehend.

**Yet, despite these hurdles, India today is at the forefront of not only being home to some of the best healthcare technology platforms in the world, but also some of the most accomplished doctors, nurses and paramedics globally.**

While these have led to the growth in telemedicine in India, other factors -- specifically pertaining to COVID-19 -- include:

## Lockdown and social distancing

Even as hospitals and clinics came under the purview of essential services during the COVID-induced lockdown and were permitted to remain open during that time, social-distancing norms and certain other restrictions enforced through guidelines issued by the government led to a slowdown in patients approaching medical establishments for treatment. With non-emergency procedures advised to be postponed and with resources easily available to connect with doctors virtually for other ailments, few people found themselves paying a visit to a clinic or a hospital. **In fact, a study conducted by FICCI-EY stated that private hospitals reported a sharp drop - up to 80% - in footfalls during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

## Fear of catching the virus

While guidelines issued by healthcare institutions and lawmakers may have driven many to turn to telemedicine amid the COVID-19 pandemic, for others, the fear and associated anxiety of contracting the virus and putting others around them at risk is believed to be the motivating factor. **Based on current projections for COVID-19 infections in the US, Forrester analysts estimated that these virtual visits could top 900 million this year alone.** While it is difficult to know for sure the reasons that would drive each of these patients to pivot to virtual care, it may be accurate to assume that the sheer safety that telemedicine solutions can afford during a pandemic can be attributed to driving up these numbers.



## Telemedicine guidelines

The spike in teleconsultations in India follows the release of the telemedicine practice guidelines in March this year. With the major focus of the government directed towards preventing and containing the spread of COVID-19, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) - in collaboration with NITI Aayog and Board of Governors (BoG), Medical Council of India (MCI) - instituted the long-pending guidelines, giving a boost to alternative ways of providing healthcare. On the back of a proper regulatory framework, healthcare providers today are better placed to implement telemedicine systems. **Additionally, this development has also come as a big victory for organizations that have been championing the cause of telemedicine and playing an active role in its advocacy for decades, including TSI.** In fact, it has been sensitizing and training doctors around the country in deploying telehealth services since then, adding even more value to its contributions to accommodate the greater adoption of telemedicine systems in India.

## Consumer expectation of convenience

Young consumers - one of the key demographics open to evolving telehealth practices - are drawn by the convenience and flexibility offered by the integration of digitization in healthcare. **This was beginning to take root even before COVID-19, demonstrated in Bain's 2019 Asia-Pacific Front Line of Healthcare survey, where nearly 50% of patients said that they expect to use digital health tools in the next five years.** This shift in consumer expectations comes as no surprise since even without making a clinical visit or waiting in long lines to see a physician, telemedicine affords them the opportunity to be offered diagnosis and treatment - anytime, anywhere - giving them more control over their healthcare.

## Slowly becoming a habit

Once treated as a backup for traditional healthcare systems, the adoption of telemedicine practices has accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, video consultation has seen one of the largest upticks in adoption, with Johns Hopkins telemedicine

solution recording over 4.2 lakh video visits (and counting) in FY20, with some weeks seeing 20k+ visits in seven days alone. **What is more, this habit formation is concurrently followed by tectonic shifts in the practices of healthcare providers who have responded to the changes prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic by embracing digital delivery of healthcare.**

## Ubiquitous & affordable internet connection and increased smartphone penetration

Digital services in healthcare have assumed greater importance amid the pandemic for its potential to provide equitable access to quality healthcare, especially for the population living in smaller towns and Tier 2 and 3 cities. According to a McKinsey report, India's internet users will increase by about 40% to 800 million and double the number of smartphones to 700 million by 2023. Recognizing the importance of digital services in care delivery and bringing quality services to remote locations, the government has been shaping its policies to create opportunities for greater coordination. Through its Digital India drive, it jointly worked with telecom and internet service providers to not only develop better connectivity but also create more affordable data packages. **According to a joint study by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and Nielsen, with half a billion active users, the Indian internet is more rural and mobile-first than ever owing to these efforts and the availability of cheap smartphones, making the internet more diverse and inclusive.**



# Benefits of telemedicine post COVID-19

This has been a year of collective introspection for humankind, more so in regard to accessing healthcare services. **People have now realized the risk of disease transmission at an OPD or emergency room.** This, in turn, made them think twice before stepping into over-crowded places and the necessity to book appointments beforehand.

Instant professional help, **availability of doctors outside business hours as well** as during weekends and availability of doctors in remote areas were among the concepts paid very little attention to ahead of the pandemic. **These are now part of everyone's routine.**

Although teleconsultation does not help during emergencies, it may come in handy as advice for first-aid and stabilization. It can also help in follow-up consultations; retrieving old data (which is often lost); reducing travel time and costs; early treatment; attribution and, therefore, making health insurance a reality in the operation space; as well as in monitoring chronic ailments.

## Key challenges addressed

Recent advances and global acceptability have paved the way for telemedicine, and looks like it will continue to help in restricting further spread of the virus among the caregivers and the patients. The Government has also acknowledged the role of telemedicine in "providing a solution for last-mile connectivity". Given its rapid growth, more specialist care – including Teleradiology, Teleradiology, TeleOb-Gyn, Teleophthalmology and TeleICU – is becoming a reality for patients in far-flung places.

It will help prioritize healthcare services, reduce wait times and non-urgent emergency room visits, freeing up valuable time and resources for more important cases. Furthermore, it will facilitate reduced requirements for expensive and scarce resources such as PPE kits; help in mitigating physician shortage, and while doing so, become an additional source of revenue for the healthcare provider.

## Eradicating quackery

The WHO report suggested that as many as 57.3% of the healthcare providers in India, who claim to be doctors, do not have a medical qualification. The prevalence of unqualified medical practitioners, especially in the rural setting, is very high and a digital healthcare policy has the potential to eradicate quackery, and provide awareness and accessibility to qualified specialist doctors who practice allopathy, dentistry, traditional Indian medicine (AYUSH - Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and homoeopathy) to rural Indians.

## Increased access to care, effective time management and reduced cost

Technology enables physicians to drastically reduce manual work and improve efficiency, resulting in a reduction in healthcare costs - and more importantly - freeing up time to treat more patients.

Telemedicine can increase the efficiency of care delivery, reduce expenses of caring for patients or transporting them to another location, and can even keep patients out of the hospital, where possible. With telemedicine, there is an opportunity to triage patients with regards to the severity of the disease, thereby, limiting healthcare costs. Patients can save time and cost of travel to locate or wait to meet a healthcare provider.

## Access to specialist care anywhere, anytime

Distance and travel time between patients and care providers can limit access to care. Fortunately, telemedicine can overcome geographic barriers to obtain healthcare, especially from specialized providers. Also, they can be particularly beneficial for patients in medically underserved communities and those in rural locations where clinician shortages exist.



## Peek into the future

Supported by the potential that telemedicine holds, healthcare companies may be building a new future. But for impact to be truly felt, this should not be accomplished by operating in silos. **Only by building a larger ecosystem and working synergistically with the government, public-private corporations and the community, can a wellness-led healthcare system anchored around technology remain sustainable.**

Recognizing the role that digitization can play in democratizing healthcare in India, the government has introduced critical regulatory changes to make healthcare more accessible. Concurrently, it has been working with public and private enterprises as well as technology companies to build a strong foundation for the advancement of telemedicine in India.

Such a concerted effort can ensure that the benefits of these initiatives reach remote communities where quality of healthcare services are poor. The first steps towards accomplishing this have already been taken with a steady rate of adoption of telehealth recorded with growing awareness about its benefits.

These efforts should be amplified with more collaboration and relevant partnerships. For instance, in order to narrow the gap between metros and non-metros in the adoption of these solutions, ISRO can provide support by strengthening connectivity with free transponder space. Another example could be a joint effort to leverage and develop the system of Electronic Medical Records (EMR), establish a healthcare reform with backing from the government's Ayushman Bharath scheme, or even open a budgetary allocation to fund associations that can supplement these initiatives.

**While this sets the stage for the creation, storage and distribution of sensitive data, this same coherent unit should work together to ensure that this information is always secure.**

The healthcare industry in India is still at a nascent stage; but for any long-term impact to happen, the larger ecosystem must work together to not only build a new future, but achieve that without losing sight of the primary mission of this enterprise: deliver integrated care to patients while still providing them autonomy over their healthcare.



# Pivot to deliver integrated care to patients

With digital healthcare practices in India resting on a firm footing under the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, **we foresee a future where the entire healthcare ecosystem will further collaborate to provide a holistic treatment to patients to improve their overall well-being.**

The WHO ably defines integrated healthcare as “an approach to strengthen people-centered health systems through the promotion of the comprehensive delivery of quality services across the life-course, designed according to the multidimensional needs of the population and the individual, and delivered by a coordinated multidisciplinary team of providers working across settings and levels of care.”

Even as telemedicine gives patients greater ownership over their healthcare, an integrated healthcare delivery like this ensures that the quality of care improves in the process. Such an approach addresses all needs of the patient - biological, psychological, and social - by making it possible to establish a comprehensive treatment plan by sharing and exchanging relevant information related to patient care among all members involved.

**By replacing fragmented and episodic care with coordinated and seamless care, this multi-pronged effort delivers integrated care to patients, shaped by the perspectives of multiple participants, including providers, policy-makers, regulators and the patient community.**

This shores up to the government’s initiatives in **establishing a healthcare reform movement in India with the development of a universal system of electronic medical records (EMR).**

This is a unique record of a person’s health that comprises their demographics, progress notes, clinical problems, past medical history, lab data, and more, **allowing access to and sharing of critical information at every potential venue of care, while still providing privacy, security, and autonomy of this information.**

Through this system-level intervention, we aim to work with the government to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare delivery in India. And as we continue to develop our current understanding of integrated care models to address some of the associated challenges, the primary goal would be to prioritize the needs of individuals, their families and communities, enhancing the quality of care and life in the process.



*How times have changed. Wanted a doctor’s opinion for a small issue. Paid online, doctor was immediately available on video call, consultation lasted five minutes, and prescription given. I think I will use this in the future too for minor issues. Saves a lot of time.*

- Shubham\* | 40-45 years (\*name changed)

# State of affairs in other countries

## US

In March this year, the Trump Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) introduced several legal and regulatory changes to facilitate more widespread use of telemedicine solutions amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This included expanding Medicare coverage for telehealth visits, relaxation of technology requirements and supervision laws related to non-physician providers, and more.

Concurrently, the Academy of Family Physicians and the American Medical Association (AMA) also released related guidelines for smooth implementation of these changes. These initiatives created a much more favorable environment for healthcare providers to adopt telemedicine systems to their delivery services. Patients have also responded well and a testament to this is offered in a Nasscom report that states that **adoption in the US shot up from 11% in 2019 to 46% in 2020 under the threat of the coronavirus.**

## China

The National Health Commission and the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine had released a set of rules to expand the country's telehealth capabilities in 2018. Although the implementation roadmap lacked clarity, it provided guidance around the collaboration between commercial companies, medical establishments, and other third-party players to further develop the telehealth industry.

This set the stage for the growth and advancement of telemedicine services in China to triage and treat patients amid the COVID-19 pandemic this year. **In fact, JD Health, the telemedicine arm of Chinese e-commerce giant JD.com, recorded a ten-fold increase in online consultations per month since the outbreak.** As the pandemic evolves, e-healthcare platforms like JD Health are projected to see even more increase in market share.

## Japan

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic saw Japan easing regulations on telemedicine practices in the country to enable remote medical treatment. **This saw a surge in usage and offerings of telehealth services by tech companies, which until the outbreak, were hamstrung by limitations in telemedicine rules that allowed doctors to remotely treat patients suffering from only a limited number of diseases.**

However, this list has expanded with the onset of the pandemic to include other illnesses, and with that, Japanese doctors can now conduct first-time visits online and treat more patients remotely. Although these changes have not been made permanent yet, it offers a glimpse into the future of healthcare in the country.

## Australia

Australia has been working towards making telehealth implementation easy for healthcare providers since the COVID-19 outbreak. Although a standard framework for the use of telehealth services and guidelines to operate video conferencing was already in place since 2016, the nation's digital health strategy was further developed to widen access to telehealth services since the outbreak.

**This followed a funding announcement of AUS \$669 million made in March to enable all Australians to access healthcare through online consultations from home.** Additionally, there was further funding to support telemedicine services for those with mental health issues, specially targeted at older people.



## About TSI

Telemedicine Society of India (TSI), which now boasts of more than 800 members, is an independent, not-for-profit, educational, and scientific body with the avowed aim to promote and encourage development, advancement, training and research in the science of telehealth and associated fields.

The International Society for Telemedicine and e-Health (ISfTeH) has recognized TSI as the official national society representing telehealth activities in India. Members of TSI are/have **been advisers and consultants to the Government of India, as well as several state governments on various matters pertaining to telehealth and digitalization of healthcare activities**, besides being instrumental in the finalization of EMR standards, medical device standards, national digital health blueprint, national health portal by the Government of India and Telemedicine Practice Guidelines by Board of Governors (MCI) and NITI Aayog (under aegis of MoHFW). The Society has been the forerunner in evangelizing the cause and practice of telemedicine, and has also been instrumental in contributing towards effective capacity building.

## About Practo

Practo, the country's leading integrated healthcare company, connects the entire health ecosystem together – patients, doctors, clinics, hospitals, pharmacies, diagnostics, and other partners - to generate exceptional value and service for all, especially the end consumers. It integrates different parts of the patients' healthcare journey so they can have one seamless experience, right from finding and booking an appointment with verified doctors, consulting verified doctors online with ETA as low as 60 seconds, getting medicines and lab tests at the doorstep, and accessing insightful health articles authored by verified doctors. Practo also makes software products that help healthcare providers - ranging from small clinics to large hospitals - digitize and deliver more efficient and higher quality healthcare to millions of patients around the world.

As technology becomes an integral part of healthcare, Practo has also become an essential enabler in helping doctors understand the nuances of managing and securely storing all health data. Practo encrypts all data with 256-bit encryption, uses HIPAA compliant data centers, and is one of the few healthcare companies to be ISO 27001 certified. Practo is present in **20 countries, helps over 18 crore patients a year, and connects them with 1 lakh+ verified doctor partners**.

## Ensuring user privacy

This report was developed to understand the healthcare patterns of Indians since the outbreak of COVID-19, while adhering to our stringent data security and privacy measures. The insights generated in this report have been created with aggregated and anonymized sets of data from our users who share their age and location with us (which is left as optional fields for them).

A fundamental tenet of Practo is ensuring that the patients' health information is safe, secure and private. Considerable investments have been made to ensure that Practo remains one of the safest places for health information stored by our clinic and hospital partners as well as patients.

Visit Practo's Privacy Policy to learn more about how we keep your data private, safe and secure.





