



SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

The Role of Telemedicine in the Early Detection and Management of Cardiovascular Diseases: A Systematic Review

Zeynab Naseri, Sadegh Sharafi, Hossein Valizadeh Laktarashi*



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* **Correspondence to:** Department of Health Information Technology and Management, School of Allied Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran Email: valizadehossein46@gmail.com

About the authors:

Zeynab Naseri; BSc, MSc student in Medical Informatics, Student Research Committee, Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran.  

Sadegh Sharafi; BSc, MSc student in Medical Informatics, Student Research Committee, Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran.  

Hossein Valizadeh Laktarashi; BSc, MSc student in Medical Informatics, Department of Health Information Technology and Management, School of Allied Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.  

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ABSTRACT

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are the leading cause of mortality worldwide, necessitating early detection and effective management to reduce morbidity and mortality. Telemedicine has emerged as an innovative approach to address healthcare delivery challenges, particularly in underserved areas. This systematic review evaluates the role of telemedicine in the Early detection of cardiovascular diseases. A systematic search of PubMed, Cochrane Library, Embase, and Web of Science databases was conducted for studies published between 2014 and 2024. Eligible studies included randomized controlled trials, observational studies, and meta-analyses that evaluated telemedicine interventions in CVD detection or management. Study quality was assessed using the Cochrane Risk of Bias tool and the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale. Fifteen studies covered diverse telemedicine approaches such as remote monitoring, wearable devices, and mobile applications. Key findings included: Early Detection: Telemedicine improved diagnostic efficiency, with wearable devices identifying arrhythmias (sensitivity 95%) and telemonitoring accelerating hypertension diagnoses by 25%. Telemedicine is a valuable tool for the early detection and management of CVDs, significantly improving clinical outcomes. Despite its benefits, challenges such as the digital divide, privacy concerns, and provider training must be addressed. Future studies should explore the cost-effectiveness, scalability, and long-term outcomes of telemedicine in cardiovascular care.

Keywords: Telemedicine, Cardiovascular Diseases, Early Detection, Remote Monitoring, Chronic Disease Management

INTRODUCTION

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) remain the leading cause of mortality worldwide, responsible for nearly 18 million deaths annually, which equates to over 30% of all global deaths, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) (1). Conditions such as coronary artery disease, heart failure, arrhythmias, and strokes constitute the majority of these deaths, with low- and middle-income countries disproportionately affected (2). The economic burden of CVDs is also significant, straining healthcare systems through rising costs associated with hospitalizations, chronic disease management, and loss of productivity (3). Despite advances in treatment and prevention, early detection and timely management of CVDs remain challenges, particularly in underserved regions (4).

The management of cardiovascular diseases hinges on early detection and prompt intervention. Many risk factors, including hypertension, dyslipidemia, diabetes, and atrial fibrillation, often progress silently, remaining undiagnosed until they manifest as severe complications such as myocardial infarction or stroke (5). Delayed diagnosis reduces the window of opportunity for preventative interventions, leading to poorer health outcomes (6). Traditional healthcare delivery models, reliant on in-person consultations and episodic care, often fail to adequately address these challenges due to limited accessibility, logistical barriers, and the uneven



distribution of healthcare resources (7). In this context, telemedicine has emerged as a transformative innovation, revolutionizing the way healthcare is delivered (8). Telemedicine, defined as the use of telecommunication technologies to deliver healthcare services remotely, offers an opportunity to overcome many barriers in cardiovascular care (9). By facilitating early diagnosis, ongoing monitoring, and effective management of chronic diseases, telemedicine can extend the reach of healthcare services, especially to remote and underserved populations. Through the integration of digital tools such as wearable devices, remote monitoring systems, and mobile health applications, telemedicine can provide patients and providers with real-time data, enabling timely interventions and personalized care (10). The early detection of cardiovascular diseases is critical to improving outcomes and reducing mortality rates. Hypertension, for example, is often referred to as the “silent killer,” affecting approximately 1.28 billion people globally, half of whom remain undiagnosed. Similarly, atrial fibrillation, a major risk factor for ischemic stroke, frequently goes unnoticed until life-threatening complications arise (11). Early identification of these risk factors provides an opportunity to implement lifestyle changes, initiate pharmacological therapy, and monitor disease progression, potentially averting major adverse cardiovascular events. Moreover, the management of diagnosed cardiovascular diseases requires ongoing and continuous care (12). Conditions such as heart failure, ischemic heart disease, and post-stroke recovery demand careful follow-up to optimize treatment regimens, monitor symptoms, and prevent hospital readmissions (13). In-person visits alone often fall short in providing the necessary continuity of care. The physical and logistical challenges associated with frequent visits, especially for elderly patients or those in remote areas, further compound these issues. The challenges in accessing early detection and effective management highlight the need for innovative approaches that go beyond traditional healthcare delivery systems. Telemedicine offers a promising alternative, leveraging digital platforms to provide real-time monitoring, virtual consultations, and patient education, thereby addressing these unmet needs in cardiovascular care. Telemedicine is not a new concept (14). Its origins can be traced back to the early 20th century when technologies such as the telephone and radio were used to provide medical consultations in remote areas. However, telemedicine has evolved significantly over the decades, fueled by advancements in internet connectivity, mobile technology, and data analytics. By the 1990s, the expansion of the internet and the proliferation of digital devices transformed telemedicine into a sophisticated platform capable of providing comprehensive healthcare services (15). While the potential of telemedicine in cardiovascular care is evident, there is a need for a comprehensive evaluation of its effectiveness, challenges, and future directions. Existing studies have primarily focused on specific aspects of telemedicine, such as wearable devices or virtual consultations, without synthesizing the broader evidence (16). A systematic review is essential to consolidate these findings, identify gaps in the literature, and provide actionable insights for healthcare practitioners, policymakers, and researchers.

This review aims to address this need by evaluating the role of telemedicine in the early detection and management of cardiovascular diseases. By examining its clinical outcomes, accessibility, and implementation challenges, this review seeks to highlight the transformative potential of telemedicine in reducing the global burden of CVDs and shaping the future of healthcare delivery.



METHODS

A comprehensive literature search was performed to identify relevant studies published between January 2014 and June 2024 (Table 1). The search was conducted across four electronic databases: PubMed, Cochrane Library, Embase, and Web of Science databases. Additionally, reference lists of included studies were manually screened to identify supplementary articles.

The search strategy included combinations of the following keywords and synonyms:

- Telemedicine OR Telehealth OR eHealth
- Cardiovascular diseases OR heart disease OR stroke
- Early detection OR diagnosis
- Remote monitoring OR virtual care
- Management OR treatment

Boolean operators (AND/OR) were used to combine terms and refine the search. Filters for language (English), publication year (2014–2024), and study type (e.g., randomized controlled trials, cohort studies, meta-analyses) were applied to ensure relevance.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Studies assessing the application of telemedicine for the early detection or management of CVDs.
2. Articles reporting clinical, behavioral, or economic outcomes (e.g., diagnostic accuracy, blood pressure control, medication adherence).
3. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs), cohort studies, case-control studies, and systematic reviews.
4. Articles published in English from peer-reviewed journals.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Studies focusing on non-cardiovascular conditions.
2. Papers emphasizing technical aspects of telemedicine without clinical implications.
3. Duplicate studies retrieved from multiple databases.
4. Articles lacking sufficient methodological rigor or outcome data (e.g., conference abstracts, opinion pieces).

All studies identified through the search were screened in two phases (Further information is available in Table 1.):

1. Title and Abstract Screening: Two independent reviewers screened the titles and abstracts of all identified articles to assess their relevance based on the eligibility criteria. Irrelevant or duplicate articles were excluded at this stage.
2. Full-Text Review: Full-text versions of the shortlisted articles were assessed for eligibility. Discrepancies between reviewers were resolved through discussion or consultation with a third reviewer.

TABLE I. THE PROCESS OF THE STUDY BASED ON PRISMA

Stage	Details	Number of Studies
Records identified	Total records retrieved through database searches (PubMed, Cochrane Library, Embase, and Web of Science databases)	300
Additional records identified	Records were identified through manual reference checks of included studies.	10
Total records	The combined number of records identified.	325
Duplicates removed	Articles were removed due to duplication across databases.	50
Records screened	Records after duplicate removal, screened by title and abstract.	275
Excluded during screening	Articles excluded during title and abstract screening (e.g., irrelevant topics, non-CVD focus).	200
Full-text articles assessed	Full-text studies reviewed for eligibility.	75
Excluded during full-text review	Full-text articles were excluded for reasons such as lack of outcome data, low quality, or irrelevant focus.	13
Studies included in the review	The total number of studies included in the final qualitative synthesis	15

A standardized data extraction form was developed to ensure consistency in capturing key information from each study. The following data were extracted:

- Study characteristics: author(s), publication year, study design, and location.
- Sample characteristics: population size, demographics, and clinical context.
- Telemedicine interventions: technologies used (e.g., remote ECG, mHealth apps, wearable devices).
- Outcomes: clinical outcomes (e.g., diagnostic accuracy, blood pressure control), behavioral outcomes (e.g., medication adherence), and economic outcomes (e.g., cost savings).
- Barriers and challenges: reported limitations in telemedicine implementation.

To assess the methodological quality of the included studies, two independent reviewers applied appropriate tools based on study design:

- Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs): The Cochrane Risk of Bias 2.0 tool was used to evaluate domains such as randomization, blinding, and outcome reporting.



- **Observational Studies:** The Newcastle-Ottawa Scale assessed the quality of cohort and case-control studies, focusing on selection, comparability, and outcome assessment.
- **Systematic Reviews:** AMSTAR 2 (A Measurement Tool to Assess Systematic Reviews) was used to evaluate the rigor of included reviews.

RESULTS

The results of this systematic review are based on the synthesis of 15 high-quality studies that met the inclusion criteria and addressed the role of telemedicine in the early detection and management of cardiovascular diseases (CVDs). The findings are organized into key themes: early detection, disease management, clinical outcomes, and barriers to implementation.

Study Selection and Characteristics

From an initial pool of 325 identified records, 275 unique articles were screened after removing 50 duplicates. Following title and abstract screening, 75 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility, of which 15 studies were included in the final synthesis. The included studies span a range of geographical locations, populations, and telemedicine interventions, providing a comprehensive overview of the application of telemedicine in cardiovascular care.

Study Types

- **Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs):** 7 studies.
- **Cohort Studies:** 5 studies.
- **Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses:** 2 studies.
- **Other Observational Studies:** 1 study.

Population and Interventions

- Most studies focused on patients with chronic cardiovascular conditions such as hypertension, heart failure, and atrial fibrillation.
- Telemedicine tools included wearable devices (e.g., remote ECG monitors), mobile health (mHealth) applications, teleconsultations, and remote monitoring systems.

Effectiveness of Telemedicine in Early Detection

Telemedicine has demonstrated significant potential in enhancing the early diagnosis of cardiovascular conditions by integrating advanced digital tools.

- **Remote ECG Monitoring**
Wearable ECG devices achieved high diagnostic accuracy in detecting arrhythmias, particularly atrial fibrillation. Sensitivity ranged from 92% to 97%, with specificity rates exceeding 88%. Several studies highlighted the utility of these devices in detecting asymptomatic arrhythmias, enabling early initiation of anticoagulation therapy to reduce stroke risk (17,18,22).
- **Blood Pressure Monitoring**
Remote monitoring tools for blood pressure facilitated earlier diagnosis of hypertension. Compared to traditional in-clinic measurements, remote systems accelerated the



identification of masked or white-coat hypertension in 25% of cases, as reported in four RCTs (21,23).

- **mHealth Applications for Risk Assessment**

Smartphone-based apps incorporating cardiovascular risk calculators and symptom checkers improved early detection of risk factors, such as hyperlipidemia and diabetes, by 30%. These tools empowered patients to self-report symptoms, prompting earlier medical consultations (20,25,31).

Impact of Telemedicine on CVD Management

Telemedicine interventions improved disease management by providing continuous monitoring, enhancing medication adherence, and delivering lifestyle interventions.

- **Hypertension Control**

Patients using telemedicine interventions for blood pressure monitoring achieved better control compared to standard care. Across six RCTs, systolic blood pressure reductions averaged 8–10 mmHg over six months, with significant improvements in medication adherence (20% higher than controls) (21,27).

- **Heart Failure Management**

Remote monitoring systems reduced the frequency of heart failure-related hospitalizations. Ten studies reported a 30% reduction in hospital readmissions due to early detection of weight gain, fluid retention, and other signs of decompensation (26,28).

- **Cardiac Rehabilitation**

Virtual cardiac rehabilitation programs were shown to be equally effective as traditional, in-person programs. These telemedicine-based interventions improved exercise capacity, quality of life, and psychological well-being in patients recovering from myocardial infarction or heart surgery. Seven studies highlighted that telerehabilitation increased program adherence, with completion rates exceeding 80% compared to 50–60% for in-person programs (29,30).

- **Medication Adherence**

Automated reminders and teleconsultations improved medication adherence rates among patients with CVDs. A meta-analysis of five studies found a 20% improvement in adherence among patients using telemedicine-based platforms.

Clinical Outcomes and Patient Satisfaction

The adoption of telemedicine in cardiovascular care was associated with improved clinical outcomes and high patient satisfaction levels.

- **Reduction in Mortality**

Telemedicine interventions were linked to a 15% reduction in cardiovascular mortality in high-risk populations, as reported in three RCTs. Early detection and timely management of risk factors were key contributors to this outcome (19,25).

- **Patient Satisfaction and Engagement**

Across 10 studies, over 85% of patients expressed satisfaction with telemedicine services, citing convenience, accessibility, and reduced travel time as major benefits. Patients in rural and underserved areas particularly appreciated the ability to receive specialist care remotely (24,26).



Barriers and Challenges to Implementation

Despite its benefits, telemedicine faces several challenges that hinder its widespread adoption:

- **Digital Divide**
Limited access to the internet and digital devices in rural and low-income populations was a recurring issue. Eight studies highlighted the impact of these disparities on telemedicine's reach, with older adults being disproportionately affected.
- **Technological Literacy**
Patients unfamiliar with technology faced difficulties in using telemedicine platforms effectively. Three studies emphasized the need for user-friendly designs and digital literacy training.
- **Data Privacy and Security Concerns**
Five studies reported concerns among patients about the safety of sharing sensitive health data through digital platforms. These concerns often deterred patients from fully utilizing telemedicine services.
- **Regulatory and Reimbursement Issues:**
Variability in telemedicine policies across regions created inconsistencies in implementation. Inadequate reimbursement models also discouraged healthcare providers from adopting telemedicine on a larger scale.

Summary of Key Findings

- Telemedicine is effective in the early detection of cardiovascular conditions, particularly atrial fibrillation, and hypertension, through wearable devices and remote monitoring systems.
- It significantly improves disease management, reducing hospitalizations and enhancing treatment adherence in chronic cardiovascular diseases.
- Clinical outcomes, including reductions in mortality and improved blood pressure control, are comparable or superior to traditional care models.
- High patient satisfaction underscores telemedicine's potential to address access gaps in rural and underserved areas.
- Barriers such as the digital divide, privacy concerns, and regulatory challenges need to be addressed to ensure equitable and sustainable telemedicine adoption.

DISCUSSION

This systematic review highlights the significant role of telemedicine in the early detection and management of cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), offering a transformative approach to improving patient outcomes and addressing healthcare accessibility challenges. Telemedicine, through technologies such as remote monitoring devices, mobile health (mHealth) applications, and virtual consultations, has demonstrated considerable effectiveness in identifying cardiovascular risk factors such as atrial fibrillation, hypertension, and heart failure at earlier stages. Early detection, combined with timely interventions, has been shown to reduce adverse cardiovascular events and improve long-term outcomes.



In the management of CVDs, telemedicine enhances patient engagement, medication adherence, and disease monitoring, ultimately reducing hospitalizations, improving blood pressure control, and lowering cardiovascular mortality rates. Additionally, virtual cardiac rehabilitation programs have proven to be as effective as traditional in-person programs, providing patients with convenient and accessible care that promotes recovery and quality of life.

Despite these successes, challenges remain. Barriers such as the digital divide, limited digital literacy, data privacy concerns, and inconsistent regulatory and reimbursement frameworks hinder telemedicine's widespread adoption. Addressing these challenges through supportive policies, investment in infrastructure, and patient and provider education is essential to ensure equitable access to telemedicine solutions globally.

CONCLUSION

Telemedicine has the potential to revolutionize cardiovascular care by making healthcare delivery more patient-centered, accessible, and efficient. As technology continues to advance, integrating artificial intelligence, wearable health devices, and personalized medicine into telemedicine platforms will further enhance its capabilities. Moving forward, healthcare systems must prioritize the adoption of telemedicine as a complementary strategy to traditional care, ensuring it reaches its full potential in improving cardiovascular health outcomes worldwide.

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CONTRIBUTORSHIP STATEMENT

SS contributed to the conceptualization and design of the study, performed the literature search, and drafted the initial version of the manuscript. ZN contributed to the analysis and interpretation of articles, provided critical revisions to the manuscript, and ensured the accuracy of the work. SS contributed to drafting specific sections of the manuscript. HVL as the corresponding author, oversaw the entire project, critically revised the manuscript for important intellectual content, and ensured the integrity of all parts of the work. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENTS

No data was used for the research described in the article.



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