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TELEMEDICINE AND ALZHEIMER: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Introduction: Worldwide, trends in life expectancy and ageing-related diseases as Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) and Alzheimer's Disease (AD) are increasing, having a rising impact on patients' quality of life, on caregivers' distress and on economic burden.

Objective—The purpose of this study was to review the use of modern technologies in medicine, usually known as Tele-Medicine, to improve quality of life of MCI and AD patients and their caregivers

Methods—A systematic literature review was conducted of all published studies examining the relationship between Tele-Medicine and Alzheimer or MCI listed in the PubMed databases from January 1995 to December 2012. The inclusion criteria were the use of technological instruments and a Mild Cognitive Impairment or Alzheimer's diagnosis by a standardized diagnostic procedure.

Results—A total of 69 articles met inclusion criteria. Overall, 21 suggested how to make a remote (10) or earlier (11) diagnosis; 31 described different type of patient's support during the stages of the disease; 9 described how to support patients' caregivers and 8 showed multiple scopes.

Conclusions—The rising use of Tele-Medicine could actively improve conditions of AD and MCI patients and their caregivers, and could offer good instruments to make early diagnosis and screening even if patients live in remote places.