

## **Telemedicine to AI: Building India's Digital Health Ecosystem**

**Date:** 11 February 2026

**Organized by:** Telemedicine Society of India (TSI) and International Society for Telemedicine & eHealth (ISfTeH)

### **Organization and Opening of the Webinar**

The webinar was organized and coordinated by **ISfTeH**, with operational coordination led by **Mr. Frederic Lievens**, Vice Executive Director of ISfTeH, in close collaboration with the **Telemedicine Society of India (TSI)**. **Dr. Umashankar S**, Honorary Secretary of TSI, played a key role in preparing the panel and supporting it, ensuring strong representation of clinical and technological expertise.

The session opened with remarks by **Dr. Michele Y. Griffith**, who emphasized the importance of international collaboration in advancing responsible digital health transformation. She highlighted the role of national telehealth and eHealth societies in aligning innovation with governance and clinical practice, and underscored ISfTeH's commitment to facilitating global knowledge exchange.

### **Moderation and Panel Discussion**

The discussion was moderated by **Dr. Sanjay Sharma**, President of TSI Karnataka and CEO of FootSecure. Dr. Sharma guided the conversation toward practical and policy-relevant issues, particularly around AI governance, patient safety, and clinical liability, ensuring a balanced and focused exchange.

The panel featured senior leaders and practitioners from the Indian digital health ecosystem, including **Dr. Sunil Shroff** (President, TSI), **Dr. Uma Nambiar** (Vice President, TSI), **Dr. R. Kim** (Past President, TSI), and **Dr. Dhruv Joshi** (CEO, Cloud Physician).

### **Regulatory Evolution and Digital Health Foundations**

Speakers highlighted that India's digital health journey has been evolving over several years. Early milestones included the introduction of electronic medical record (EMR) standards in 2016–2017, followed by the acceleration of digital health adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic. This period led to the formalization of Telemedicine Practice Guidelines, which clarified patient and physician identification, digital prescribing, and professional accountability.

### **National Digital Health Infrastructure and Interoperability**

A major focus of the discussion was the **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)**, described as one of the most ambitious national digital health initiatives globally. Particular emphasis was placed on ABDM's interoperability sandbox, which requires digital health software to be tested for compatibility across systems. This was presented as a critical enabler of longitudinal electronic health records in India's decentralized healthcare system.

### **Data Protection, Privacy, and Patient Trust**

The **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act**, enacted in 2023 and updated in 2025, was highlighted as a foundational pillar for patient trust. Speakers stressed that patient privacy and consent-based data use are non-negotiable and central to the responsible expansion of digital health and AI applications.

### **Artificial Intelligence in Clinical Practice**

AI was consistently framed as a clinical decision-support tool rather than an autonomous decision-maker. While connectivity and infrastructure challenges have decreased significantly, cultural and organizational barriers remain. Hospital culture, change management, and workforce training were identified as key challenges that require continuous engagement and structured onboarding.

### **Real-World Applications and Smart Hospitals**

Examples were shared from tele-ICU and tele-emergency settings, where camera-enabled systems and AI algorithms are being used to detect early signs of patient deterioration. These developments are contributing to the emergence of smart hospital rooms that enhance patient monitoring while maintaining human oversight.

### **Ethics, Safety, and Clinical Liability**

Patient safety and data privacy were emphasized as non-negotiable principles. Concerns were raised about AI applications that extend beyond diagnostic support into treatment-related decision-making, particularly in mental health contexts. At present, liability remains with the clinician, as AI tools function with a human in the loop. However, speakers acknowledged that liability frameworks may evolve as regulatory standards mature.

### **Equity and Access to Expertise**

The unequal distribution of medical expertise was identified as a key driver of telemedicine adoption. AI-enabled telemedicine was presented as a mechanism to extend specialist care to underserved areas and reduce disparities in access, reinforcing digital health's role as a tool for equity.

## Conclusion

The webinar highlighted that India is approaching a critical phase in digital health adoption, where regulation, technology, and clinical practice are increasingly aligned. The discussion reinforced that sustainable digital transformation depends not only on innovation, but also on ethical governance, institutional readiness, and continued collaboration among clinicians, technologists, regulators, and national societies.



