

# MANAGING SUICIDES VIA VIDEOCONFERENCING IN A REMOTE NORTHERN COMMUNITY IN CANADA

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction.** Telehealth in remote communities has been reported to be cost-effective for emergency medicine and possibly for psychiatry.

**Methods.** The cost of sending a patient out of a remote community for suicide assessment was compared with the cost of maintenance and on-line charges of videoconference. The cost comparison was used to determine the potential savings to the provincial government. User satisfaction was assessed through qualitative questionnaires.

**Results.** The use of videoconferencing for mental health assessment for 71 patients in a remote northern community saved the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador \$140,088 in 2003. Patients and health professionals were satisfied with mental health assessment via videoconference.

**Conclusion.** The provision of mental health assessments for patients in a remote community in Labrador, Canada by videoconference was effective and saved money. (*Int J Circumpolar Health* 2004;63(4):422-428)

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