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Sommario/riassunto

Telemedicine--the use of information and telecommunications technologies to provide and support health care when distance separates the participants--is receiving increasing attention not only in remote areas where health care access is troublesome but also in urban and suburban locations. Yet the benefits and costs of this blend of medicine and digital technologies must be better demonstrated before today's cautious decisionmakers invest significant funds in its development. Telemedicine presents a framework for evaluating patient care applications of telemedicine. The book identifies managerial, technical, policy, legal, and human factors that must be taken into account in evaluating a telemedicine program. The committee reviews previous efforts to establish evaluation frameworks and reports on results from several completed studies of image transmission, consulting from remote locations, and other telemedicine programs. The committee also examines basic elements of an evaluation and considers relevant issues of quality, accessibility, and cost of health care. Telemedicine will be of immediate interest to anyone with interest in the clinical application of telemedicine.