Telemedicine consultations improve quality of care according to a study published in Critical Care Medicine titled *Impact of Critical Care Telemedicine Consultations on Children in Rural Emergency Departments*.

Rural hospitals take advantage of telemedicine to access specialty care from doctors in other parts on the country. Researchers studied five rural hospitals with telemedicine systems. The study focused on young emergency room patients. The telemedicine system in each rural hospital linked to a videoconferencing system in the UC Davis Children's Hospital pediatric intensive care unit.

Researchers studied the impact of the telemedicine system on patients in the highest triage category who needed instant evaluation and treatment. They studied a total of 320 patients and found that the average quality of care was higher for patients who received telemedicine consultation than those who had a phone consultation or no consultation.

Patients who participated in a telemedicine conference averaged a score of 5.76 for quality of care on a scale of 1 to 7. Patients who only had a phone consultation had an average quality of care score of 5.38 on the same scale. Finally, patients who did not have any consultation averaged a score of 5.26.

*Reuters Health* reports, Dr. James Marcin from UC Davis Children's Hospital and senior author of the study said ""we tend to spend more time on the videoconferencing calls than we do on the telephone. When I'm on a videoconferencing call I can see the child moving, I can see the monitors. There's a lot more information that we're gathering when we use videoconferencing than when we're relying on what the doctor is telling us."

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