Telemedicine, the use of electronic devices to deliver health care remotely, was adopted in neurosurgery in the mid-1990s with two main targets: appropriate location of neurosurgical patients in the area networks of hospitals and outpatient management. Then, in March 2020, the world broke! As COVID-19 rapidly shut down what was then modern healthcare, patients and physicians became isolated and healthcare spiraled into a world where in-person consultation was a risk to both patients and physicians. The dichotomy of risking one’s life owing to a new, unseen, and poorly understood threat versus the risk of the patient avoiding medical treatment for known and serious problems tore physicians and patients apart. As medical professionals always do, we rose quickly to the challenge and extended the use of telemedicine across the world at an unprecedented and effective pace, thereby doing what we set out to do in medical school: care for our patients.

This timely issue of Neurosurgical Focus addresses the goal of describing the best practices in telemedicine for optimizing patient care, featuring papers from China, Japan, India, Europe, and the US and describing novel ways to utilize telemedicine in neurosurgery and respond to patient needs. The covered topics include enhanced reach to rural regions to improve patient transfers, clinical care (including that performed at outpatient clinics), and distant support for operative procedures. Although no single issue can address the breadth and scope of worldwide, ongoing telemedicine activities in neurosurgery, we hope this collection of articles inspires continued progress in the field toward better connection, better care, and ultimately improved patient outcomes in neurosurgery supported by this technology.

https://thejns.org/doi/abs/10.3171/2022.3.FOCUS22149

Disclosures
The authors report no conflict of interest.

Correspondence
Franco Servadei: franco.servadei@gmail.com.