

Telemedicine during the COVID-19 pandemic: experiences from western China

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Telemedicine during the COVID-19 pandemic: experiences from western China

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Abstract

Disasters and pandemics pose unique challenges to health care delivery. As healthcare systems are set to be further stretched with the increasing burden of COVID-19, telemedicine, including tele-education may be effective way to rationally allocate medical resources. During the COVID-19 pandemic, practice showed that telemedicine was a feasible, effective way with good acceptability in western China, translating in significant improvement in professional coverage in this underserved area. The successes of telemedicine in western China may provide a useful reference for other parts of the world.

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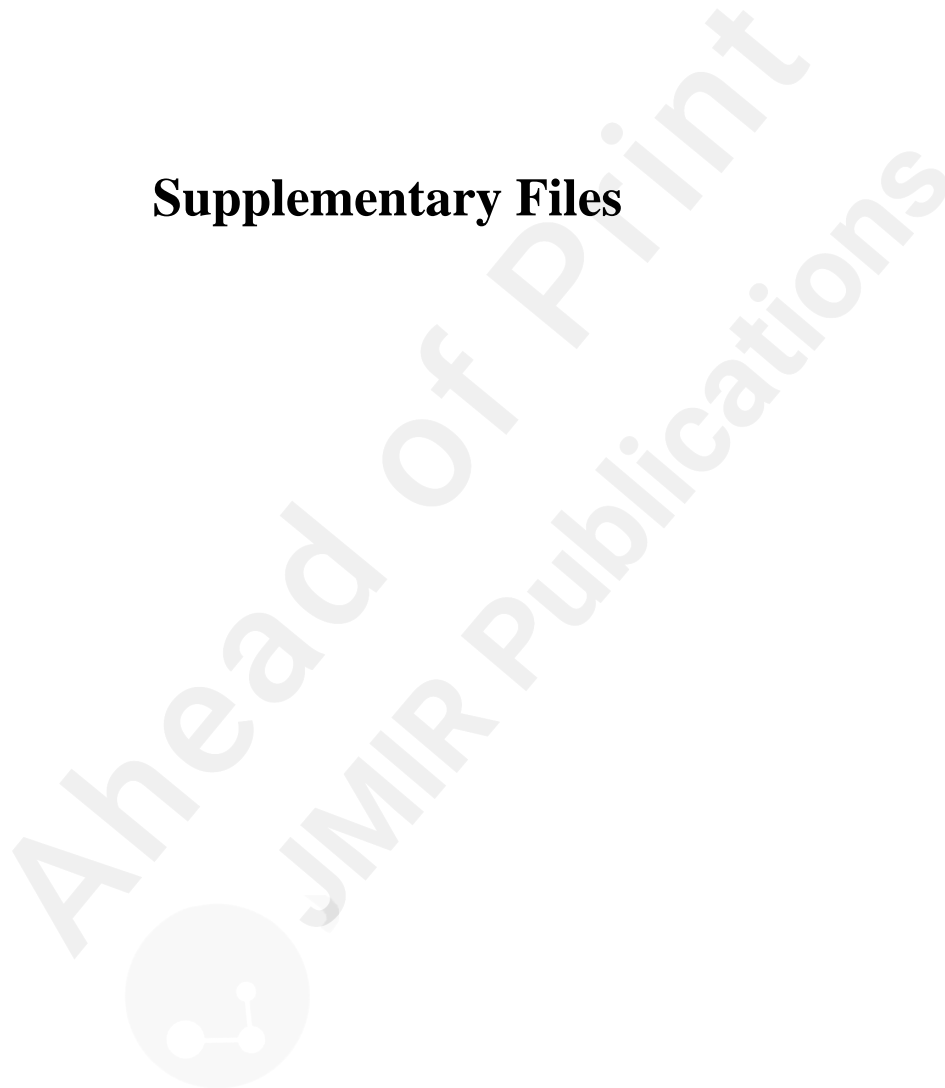
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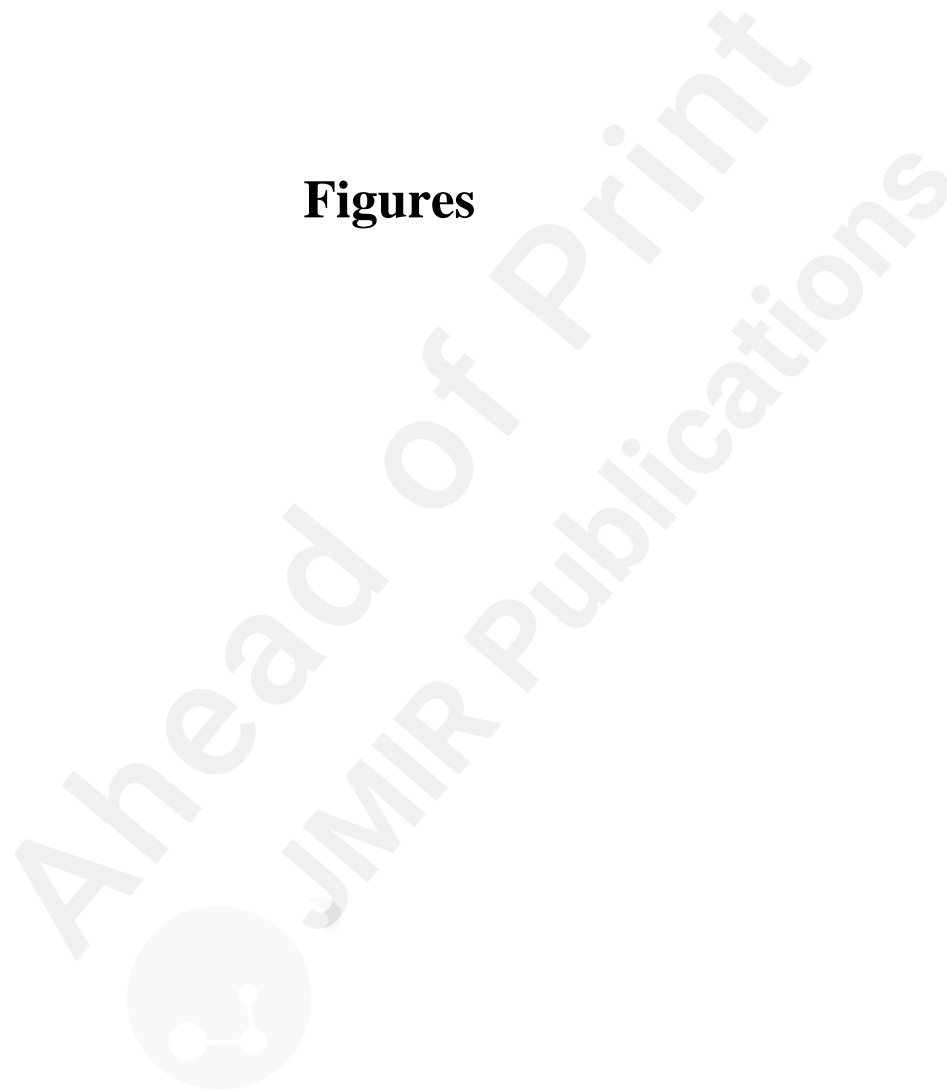
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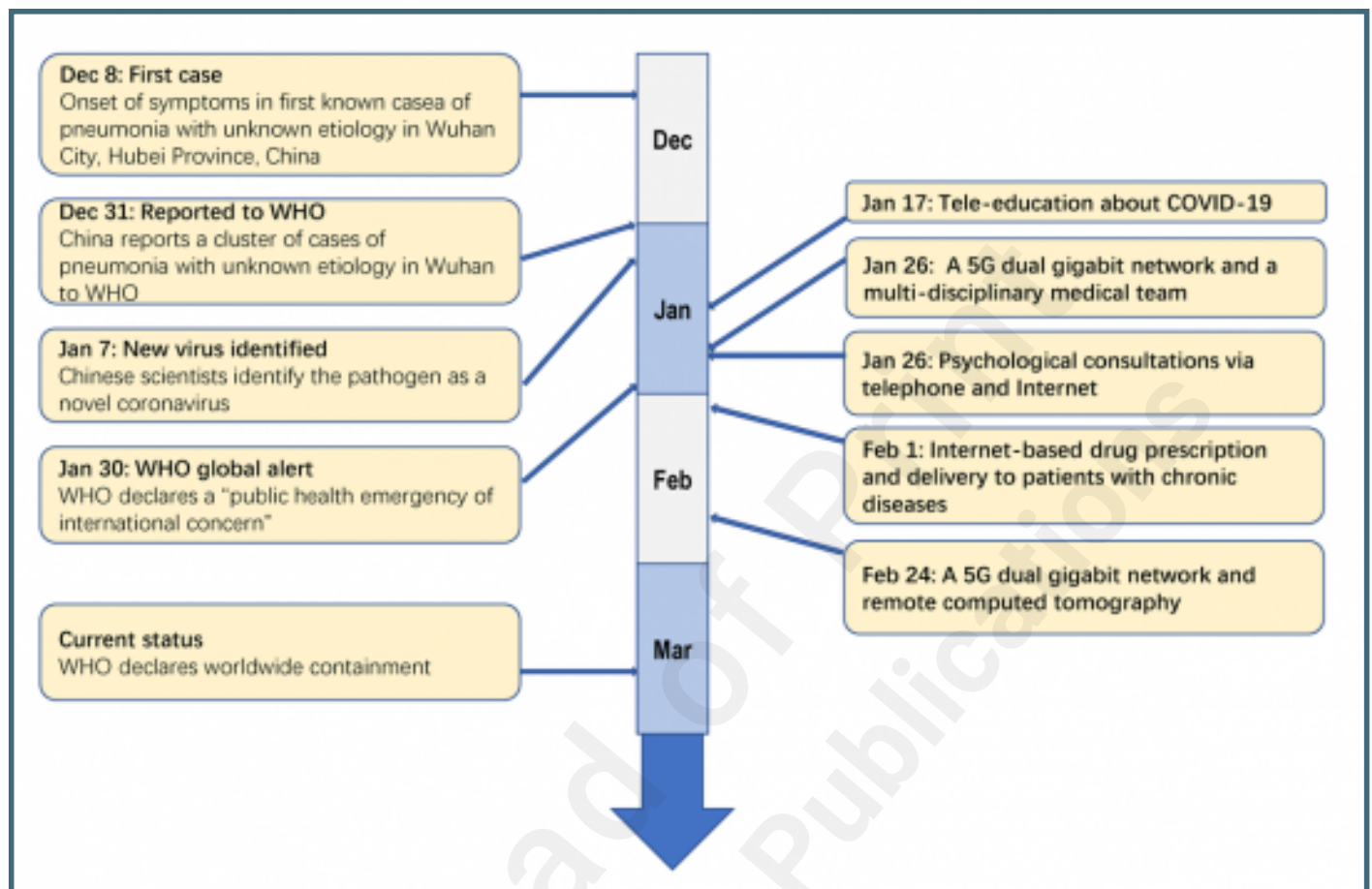
Supplementary Files



Figures



Telemedicine system in western China during the COVID-19 pandemic. Left: Timeline of COVID-19 events since the first case reported on 8 December 2019. Right: Timeline of telemedicine milestones in Sichuan province of western China during the COVID-19 pandemic. WHO, World Health Organization.



The 5G telemedicine network of Sichuan province of China established during the COVID-19 pandemic. This system makes use of newly established China Telecom 5G Dual Gigabit infrastructure and currently covers all designated hospitals for COVID-19 of Sichuan province (5 provincial-level, 24 municipal-level, and 179 county-level hospitals), with the West China Hospital of Sichuan University as the central node. The median distance between a spoke hospital and WCHSU is 319 km (range, 20 to 1191 km).

