

Telemedicine and Robotics in the Conflict of Laws

There is a very unusual article in the latest issue of the *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics* by Bernard Dickens and Rebecca Cook (Faculty of Law, University of Toronto) on “**Legal and Ethical Issues in Telemedicine and Robotics**”. The abstract reads:

Modern medical concerns with telemedicine and robotics practiced across national or other jurisdictional boundaries engage the historical, complex area of law called conflict of laws. An initial concern is whether a practitioner licenced only in jurisdiction A who treats a patient in jurisdiction B violates B's laws. Further concerns are whether a practitioner in A who violates a contract or treats a patient in B negligently incurs liability in B, A, or both, and, if treatment lawful in A is unlawful in B, whether the practitioner commits a crime. Judicial procedures are set by courts in which proceedings are initiated, but courts may decline jurisdiction due to inconvenience to parties. If courts accept jurisdiction, they may apply their own substantive legal rules, but may find that the rules of a conflicting jurisdiction should apply. Cross-border care should not change usual medical ethics, for instance on confidentiality, but may mitigate or aggravate migration of specialists.

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