Carplo The Need for Remote **Rehabilitation in Contemporary** Healthcare

Whitepaper

Abdellatif, F, Sonaike, V February 2024



Introduction

In contemporary healthcare, the challenges faced by patients in accessing essential services such as physical therapy are profound. Issues like transportation costs, mobility limitations, and the need for personalized therapeutic interventions underscore the critical need for innovative solutions. Remote rehabilitation (remote rehab) has emerged as a promising solution, particularly accelerated by the global pandemic in 2020, which heightened the adoption of telemedicine technologies. Remote rehab applications are designed with intuitive interfaces, making them accessible even to technologically challenged individuals. Research highlights a growing preference for telemedicine due to its convenience and associated benefits. For instance, a study on the usability of telemedicine in physical therapy rehabilitation (PTR) notes, "While people formerly preferred live sessions for PTR, the convenience of telemedicine is increasingly emerging." [4] This shift is driven by advantages such as reduced costs, decreased waiting times, and elimination of unnecessary travel, which are particularly beneficial for patients with mobility limitations or chronic conditions like COPD and joint injuries.

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Furthermore, remote rehab allows patients to engage in therapy sessions from their homes, overcoming the logistical challenges associated with commuting to healthcare facilities. This flexibility not only improves access but also enhances patient adherence to therapy plans. Patients can perform tailored exercises under the quidance of licensed physical therapists, receiving real-time feedback to correct form and technique, thereby facilitating the restoration of mobility and strength. Below is a plot of patients who were satisfied with telehealth physical therapy and 89% of patients were overall satisfied with physical therapy through remote modalities. [6]



Fig. 2 Mean participant responses (±1 SD) on a 100 mm visual analogue scale. (Q1) confidence in using telehealth; (Q2) recommend to friend unable to travel; (Q3) as good as in-person assessment; (Q4) visual clarity; (Q5) audio clarity; (Q6) overall satisfaction.

Contrary to initial skepticism, numerous studies have demonstrated the efficacy of tele-rehabilitation compared to traditional face-to-face therapy. For instance, a trial referenced by Medscape found that participants in both in-person and telehealth sessions showed similar improvements in knee pain and physical function over a three-month period.[3] Interestingly, the online group reported better session attendance and higher convenience, highlighting the benefits of remote access. To add on, in a study determining the role of virtual physical therapy in a post pandemic world, 78% of clinicians rated virtual physical therapy's ability to provide a quality initial assessment as a good or better whereas 95.6% of clinicians rated virtual physical therapy's ability to provide quality follow up sessions as good or higher and 64.8% of that 95.6% rated its ability as very good. [5]







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How you would rate Telehealth in your ability to provide a quality initial assessment / evaluation?

Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Total Responses
18	37	29	7	93

How you would rate Telehealth in your ability to provide quality follow-up treatment sessions?

Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Total Responses
4	29	44	17	93

Rating clinician confidence when performing a telehealth initial evaluation and follow-up visit.

Remote rehab also offers patients greater control over their healthcare schedules, allowing them to fit therapy sessions into their daily routines without the constraints of fixed appointment times or extensive travel. This flexibility is particularly advantageous for patients in rural or underserved areas who may face significant travel times to access healthcare facilities. [1] Looking ahead, advancements in telemedicine technologies continue to enhance the capabilities of remote rehab. Innovations such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are being integrated into rehabilitation programs, offering immersive experiences that simulate real-world environments and activities. These technologies not only improve engagement but also enhance the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions, making rehabilitation more interactive and personalized. Moreover, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) algorithms allows for the analysis of large datasets generated from remote rehab sessions. These insights enable healthcare providers to customize treatment plans based on individual patient progress and outcomes, thereby optimizing therapeutic efficacy.

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The integration of remote rehabilitation represents a transformative shift in healthcare delivery, offering substantial benefits in terms of accessibility, patient satisfaction, and clinical outcomes.[2] By leveraging telemedicine technologies in physical therapy modalities, healthcare providers can expand care reach, reduce healthcare disparities, and empower patients to actively participate in their rehabilitation journeys from the comfort and convenience of their homes. As we move forward, advocating for the widespread adoption of remote telemedicine in physical therapy will be crucial. It is imperative to continue advancing technological capabilities, conducting robust research, and fostering collaborations between healthcare providers, technology developers, and policymakers. Together, we can ensure equitable access to high-quality rehabilitation services and improve overall healthcare outcomes globally. In conclusion, remote rehab stands poised to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of healthcare. Embracing these innovations not only addresses current challenges but also paves the way for a more inclusive and effective healthcare system for all.

References



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