



Musculoskeletal

Physiotherapist and patient experiences with telehealth

What are the experiences of those who consulted via videoconference during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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There is evidence that telehealth is an effective physiotherapy service delivery mode for some conditions, with outcomes similar to, or even better than, those achieved with in-person care in musculoskeletal conditions, joint surgery, and cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation.

There is also some evidence that telehealth is perceived to be safe and effective by physiotherapists delivering the service and by patients with various conditions, including: osteoarthritis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, following knee replacement, heart failure and older patients with disability.

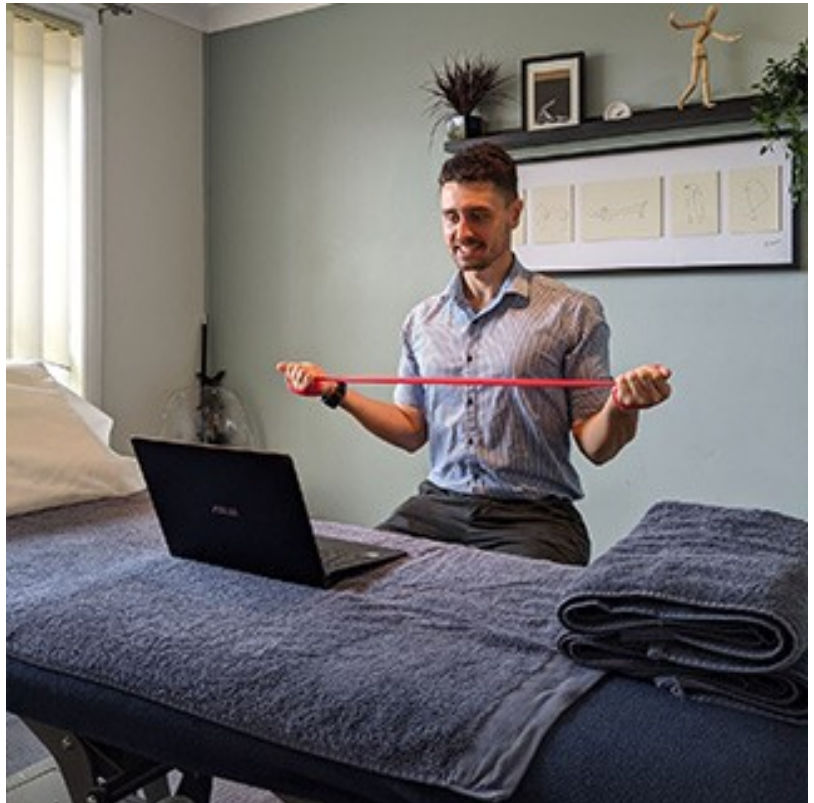
Despite this evidence supporting telehealth's effectiveness and acceptability for some conditions, uptake had previously been slow due to a range of factors, including: lack of reimbursement for services; inadequate physiotherapist knowledge, experience or confidence in telehealth; clinician resistance to changing clinical practice; and patient beliefs or preferences for in-person care.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had a dramatic impact on uptake in telehealth. A group of Australia academic physiotherapists used this opportunity to explore how this use of videoconferencing for tele-physiotherapy was experienced by over 200 physiotherapists and over 400 patients.

Physiotherapists gave moderate-to-high ratings for the effectiveness of and their satisfaction with videoconferencing. Most intended to continue to offer individual consultations and group classes via videoconferencing beyond the pandemic.

For individual consultations and group classes, respectively, most patients had moderately or extremely positive perceptions about ease of technology use, comfort communicating, satisfaction with management, satisfaction with privacy/security, safety and effectiveness. Compared with 68 percent for group classes, 47 percent of patients indicated they were moderately or extremely likely to choose videoconferencing for individual consultations in the future.

Want to read deeper into this topic? Have a look at the free full text version of this article published in [Journal of Physiotherapy](#)!



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