

Advanced Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy and Telehealth – Improving access for patients following joint arthroplasty

Stephanie Carroll, Carolyn Page, Belinda Cary & Colin Laurie

Aim: To implement a Telehealth service within the orthopaedic post arthroplasty review (PAR) clinic at St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne (SVHM); to improve clinic efficiency and increase access to care.

Method:

Scoping Phase:

- Literature review and benchmarking of Telehealth services in Victoria
- Survey of 100 patients to ascertain interest in utilising Telehealth and potential barriers
- Eligibility criteria developed based on literature, consumer and orthopaedic surgeon consultation

Pilot Phase:

- Broad stakeholder engagement
- Telehealth clinic processes developed
- Technology interface establishes (Blue Jeans)
- Online access to radiology secured for external sites
- Telehealth trialled on a small cohort of patients
- Processes modified following patient feedback

Integration Phase:

- Patients triaged and invited to use Telehealth
- Evaluation of service
- Training of other Advanced Musculoskeletal Physiotherapists and orthopaedic surgeons to enhance sustainability of service
- Webinar education delivered to 10 public healthcare organisations across Victoria to share learnings

Results:

Telehealth Clinic Activity

- 50 occasions of service (OOS) provided
- No adverse events reported
- 40% patients seen were still employed
- See Table 1 for patient demographics

Results cont..

Table 1: Patient Demographics (completed Telehealth)

Patient Demographics	
Age	64 years (43-83)
Gender	Male = 16; Female = 34
Total Knee / Hip Arthroplasty	23 patients / 27 patients
Distance from SVHM	120km (13 – 745km)

Improved clinic efficiency

Table 2: Clinic efficiency

Measure	Telehealth	Standard PAR Clinic
Total OOS (incl waiting time)	9 minutes	43 minutes
DNA rate	2%	14%
Surgeon new patient capacity /month	88	59

Cost / time savings to patients and the organisation

- Over 6000kms total patient distance travel saved
- An average of \$84 saved per patient appointment (travel, petrol, time off work)
- An average of 5hrs saved per patient appointment (includes travel time, waiting for appointment and time off work)
- Average cost of Telehealth OOS was \$18.25 less than standard PAR clinic appointment
- Patient transport costs – total saving of \$4,870 for SVHM

High level of patient satisfaction with service

- 100% patients reported being satisfied with Telehealth and would use again for future appointments
- 95% patients felt they received the same standard of care as with a face-to-face appointment



Conclusion:

The addition of Telehealth to the existing PAR clinic led to improvements in clinic efficiency and patient access to care as well as reducing costs for both patients and SVHM. Patients had greater choice in their care delivery and the benefits of this were reflected in the high patient satisfaction demonstrated in this trial.

Telehealth technology enabled patients to receive high standard and specialist care without the need to endure crowded waiting rooms or bear the cost of travel and time away from work and family. This safe, efficient and innovative service has now been permanently integrated into the PAR clinic at SVHM, offering greater choice to patients in the way their care is delivered.

Contact:

Carolyn Page

Carolyn.page@svha.org.au

