



“Communicate, communicate, communicate”: Advanced Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy services, enabling factors for multi-site implementation



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Aim: Advanced musculoskeletal physiotherapy (AMP) services are a safe, cost-efficient model of care that improves patient access and quality of care.¹ The aim of this study was to explore enablers of a large scale implementation of AMP services² from the perspective of clinical staff.

Design: Qualitative study.

Participants: 12 physiotherapists from 12 different healthcare networks (seven metropolitan, three regional, two rural) implemented AMP services (orthopaedic postoperative joint replacement review n=10, general orthopaedics n=1, emergency n=1 and neurosurgery n=1) over a 12 month period. Participants completed a structured survey. Thematic analysis was used with themes mapped to the validated Theoretical Domains Framework^{3,4}

Results: Nine major themes regarding enablers to the implementation of the AMP services emerged from the data. These were: demand/capacity, model of care, the organisation, stakeholders, communication, planning and processes, evaluation, workforce and learning and assessment framework. Important enablers included engagement and buy-in from key stakeholders and medical staff, and well-established AMP frameworks for training and operations (Table 1).

Discussion: A key factor in motivation for implementation of AMP services was to increase access, capacity, and throughput to address the rising demand and burden of patients with musculoskeletal conditions presenting to individual public health services. This goal aligns well with health care priorities of public hospitals.

Discussion (cont): Advanced musculoskeletal physiotherapists key capabilities were to be highly clinically skilled and knowledgeable, hardworking, adaptable and flexible, and have strong communication skills. The AMP Clinical Education Framework⁵ was perceived to successfully provide the training and competency assessment of physiotherapists working in AMP roles across a diverse range of hospital settings. Economic evaluation as part of any AMP service implementation project is critical to include, strengthening business cases and gaining organisational funding and support for ongoing sustainable AMP services. Clinician-identified enablers for AMP services to assist their organisation to improve access for musculoskeletal patients were having key stakeholder support and well established AMP learning and operational frameworks.^{2,5}

Conclusion: Communication and relationships with stakeholders emerged as critical for successful implementation and should be prioritised along with developing and supporting knowledgeable, adaptable AMP clinicians.

	Domain	Major Theme	Enablers – sub themes
Capability	Knowledge	Learning and assessment framework	Detailed, relevant, thorough, well-structured
		Organisation Evaluation	Understanding key issues Monitor and improve performance
	Skills	Learning and assessment framework Workforce	Senior medical staff involvement in assessment; mentors; AMP confidence in skill; known credentialing standard Pool of appropriately skilled physiotherapists; experienced and dedicated
		Communication	AMP clinicians with strong communication skills
Memory / attention / decision processes	Learning and assessment framework Planning and processes	Time for training Adaptability and flexibility	
Motivation	Action planning/ behaviour regulation	Learning and assessment framework Workforce	Adaptable to the individual clinician and health network Succession planning; team of AMP clinicians
	Social / professional role and identity	Organisation	Comprehensive clinical governance structure
		Stakeholders	Stakeholders' knowledge of the AMP and service
	Motivation & goals / optimism	Workforce Organisation	Multiple staff willing to further knowledge and skills Solution to access blocks in specialist clinics; reducing costs and improving efficiency
Opportunity	Beliefs about consequences	Capacity/demand	High demand and poor access to specialist clinics
		Model of care	Efficient model with clear scope of practice minimises risk
	Reinforcement	Stakeholders	Maximise early and open dialogue with all stakeholders
	Intentions Goals	Model of care Model of care	Benefits from engagement of medical staff; improving patient outcomes Engagement of medical staff in refinement
Opportunity	Environmental context and resources	Planning and processes	Clear scope of practice minimises risk
		Communication	Clear referral processes; allocate time; thorough plan
	Social influences	Capacity/demand	Regular schedule with key stakeholders
		Communication	Initial restriction of clinic capacity
		Organisation	Strategy; regular meetings
		Stakeholders	Support Support; relationships

¹ Harding, P., Burge, A., Walter, K., Shaw, B., Page, C., Phan, U., . . . Liew, S. (2017). Advanced musculoskeletal physiotherapists in post arthroplasty review clinics: a state wide implementation program evaluation. *Physiotherapy*.
² Department of Health. (2014b). Advanced Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Operational Framework. Retrieved from <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/advanced-musculoskeletal-physiotherapy-operational-framework>
³ Michie, S., van Stralen, M. M., & West, R. (2011). The behaviour change wheel: a new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation science*, 6(1), 42. doi:10.1186/1748-5908-6-42
⁴ Cane, J., O'Connor, D., & Michie, S. (2012). Validation of the theoretical domains framework for use in behaviour change and implementation research. *Implementation science*, 7(1), 37. doi:10.1186/1748-5908-7-37
⁵ Department of Health. (2014a). Advanced Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Clinical Education Framework. Retrieved from <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ampworkforce/docs/amp-clinical-ed-framework.pdf>.