

# Telehealth by physiotherapists in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic

## Physiotherapist Information Brief

### What is the Telehealth by physiotherapists in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic project?

This project is being funded the Physiotherapy Research Foundation and will be delivered by a collaboration of the University of Melbourne, University of Queensland and Flinders University.

The project was developed with input from clinicians, telehealth experts, business owners and funding bodies to evaluate physiotherapy treatment delivered via telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We will be looking at a number of measure including:

- the characteristics of physiotherapists who implemented telehealth services
- the nature of the services
- the types of patients who utilised telehealth physiotherapy services
- the types of conditions that were treated and their management
- patient outcomes and experiences, and
- consultation features.

This information can help to secure future funding of telehealth services by physiotherapists once the pandemic has ended.

It is a cross-sectional online survey with ethics approval to be obtained through the University of Melbourne. Both participating physiotherapists and patients will provide informed consent.

### Why are we doing it?

Funding from government, private health insurers and compensable bodies to support telehealth delivered by physiotherapists has not been previously available, despite advocacy and lobbying by individuals and organisations such as the Australian Physiotherapy Association.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has now facilitated a major shift from physiotherapy provided in-person to that provided via telehealth. Temporary rebates are currently being provided by funding bodies to support telehealth by physiotherapists during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The data we are collecting will provide vital information to government, private health insurers and other third party payers to ensure there is access to ongoing funding of these services after the pandemic.

### What will I need to do?

- Complete a survey about your current and past use of telehealth services – this a one-off survey of approximately 10-15 minutes.
- Invite (on a monthly basis) all of your new eligible patients to participate in the project. You will do this via monthly email (up to November 2020 at the latest) – we will provide the text to include in the invitation emails and we will ask you to report how many people you invite via email each month. The researchers will conduct the surveys with the participating patients.

- Complete a second survey about your telehealth services provided during the COVID-19 pandemic – this is a one-off survey of approximately 15 minutes, to be completed at the end of the study, no later than November 2020.

### Who is eligible to participate?

Participating physiotherapists must currently be:

- registered to practice in Australia.
- in private practice or a community health centre.
- delivering physiotherapy care via video conference.

### When does it start?

You can register your interest now using the link below. We are expecting to begin data collection in May.

### How do I get involved?

Simply click on the link provided below.

<https://redcap.healthinformatics.unimelb.edu.au/surveys/?s=MWJKDWHXM3>

### For further information contact:

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