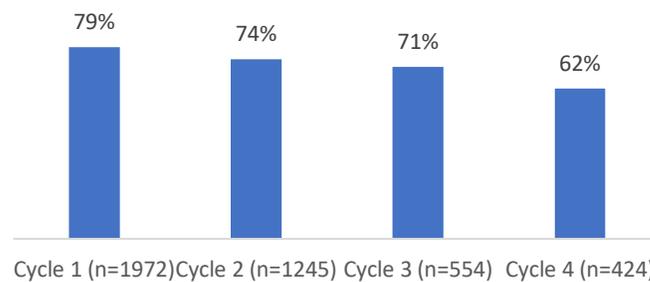


COVID-19 Quick Canadian Physiotherapist Survey: Summary of the fourth (June 26- June 29 2020) pan-Canadian survey of physiotherapists' experiences with COVID-19

On Friday June 26, BC-Primary Health Care Research Network launched the Cycle 4 of the bi-weekly COVID-19 Quick Canadian Physiotherapist Survey. An email invitation to participate was distributed to physiotherapists through provincial professional associations, as well as via Twitter, and personal networks. The survey remained open until June 29 at 11:59pm PST.

Main results: Physiotherapists are delivering both modified in-person care and virtual care while managing easing, yet still significant stress that is variable across provinces.

Percentage of physiotherapists providing virtual care



Virtual care continues to be a prominent component of physiotherapy practice

- Of physiotherapists offering virtual care, 75% are providing mostly in-person care with some virtual care, 5% are providing both modes equally, and 20% are providing mostly or exclusively virtual care.

Physiotherapists are accessing a wide variety of resources and supports to assist in providing virtual care (n=137 respondents)

- 40% used resources (including webinars, toolkits, or written documents) from the Canadian Physiotherapy Association or Provincial Physiotherapy Associations
- 22% attended sessions or used materials available through Embodia, an online education platform for physiotherapists
- 25% accessed materials through electronic medical records systems (e.g. Jane)
- 19% found materials at provincial physiotherapy colleges or regulatory bodies
- 9% engaged in mock scenarios, in-services, discussions, or resource development with other physiotherapy colleagues
- 8% participated in formal internal workplace training or courses
- 6% have found support on social media (i.e. Facebook groups)

Variability in Physiotherapists' stresses and patient volumes across Provinces

- Physiotherapists are currently treating an average of 42% of their normal patient caseload either in-person or virtually (varying from 30% in Manitoba to 73% in Quebec)
- Physiotherapists rated the current level of strain on their practice related to COVID-19 as 3.5 on a scale from 1=no impact; 5=high impact (varying from 3.3 in BC to 3.9 in Ontario)
- Sources of stress include concern about the health of patients who have not had COVID-19 (52%); the future of their own practice (48%), patients who struggle to use virtual care (36%),

and a lack of PPE or need to re-use PPE (16%), staff (e.g. office manager or front desk) unable to work due to illness/quarantine (12%).

Policy Recommendations

Physiotherapy practice is changing. Virtual care is quickly becoming part of practice. There is an opportunity for continuing education and enhanced virtual care training. Less than half of respondents accessed any kind of resource in delivering virtual care. Physiotherapists clearly need further support and resources from regulatory bodies, professional associations, and health care leaders to support the provision of virtual care. Training and preparing the physiotherapy workforce to offer virtual care is urgently needed.

194 Physiotherapists gave perspectives on what they believe would be beneficial for ongoing implementation and provision of virtual care

Practical strategies for assessment and treatment when providing virtual care: “Webinar or classes on how to adapt certain tests and treatments to be done remotely.” PT 8

“[I need] strategies at providing care virtually when I am primarily using hands-on care in-clinic.” PT 26

Advocacy and positive messaging directed to the public, government, and insurers on virtual care

“The public needs to be made more aware of [virtual care] and the benefits...virtual health physio is another valuable and legitimate way physiotherapists also practice.” PT 23

“Funding for virtual care...especially when servicing remote areas.” PT 68

“Advocacy for continued support of the insurance companies to pay for virtual care will be crucial throughout the length of this pandemic.” PT 161

Guidance from governing bodies and research evidence to support best practice in virtual care

“College guidelines [on virtual care] are extremely vague and subject to interpretation and more specific guidance would have been greatly appreciated.” PT 89

“Research to demonstrate that virtual care is effective and not just a stop gap.” PT 111

Technology and administrative support “More training on specific platforms & techniques e.g. how to use a remote camera to demo or to view what client is doing.” PT 75

“Technicalities in regard to camera use (i.e. angles, light, distance)” PT 22

Sample: 424 physiotherapists responded from across Canada. Every province was represented and one territory, with the greatest participation from British Columbia (41%), Ontario (24%), and Quebec (17%). The majority (79%) of physiotherapists reported working in private practice with 41% owning their clinic. Public practice physiotherapists made up 18% of the sample. Over three quarters (79%) of respondents identified as women, one quarter (24%) reported working in a rural setting, 14% worked in a hospital, 51% reported working as part of an interdisciplinary team, and 21% reported that more than half of their patients spoke English or French as a second language.