

Developing collaborative partnerships between hospital and local gym facilities to successfully facilitate long-term self-management.

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Background: Pulmonary, cardiac and heart failure rehabilitation all improve and optimise client's health status, however there are barriers for patients continuing independent exercise regimes following discharge. By removing potential client barriers, working collaboratively with local gym facilities and utilising a hospital-trained accredited exercise physiologist (AEP) to provide clients with individualised gym program and guide clients to continue exercise regime in their local gym, can provide a safe and effective method to facilitate long-term self-management.

Method: A prospective observation cohort study approach was used with 63 clients who volunteered from St. Vincent's Hospital Melbourne's Sub-acute Ambulatory Care Service (SACS) Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation (phase 2). The mean age of clients' was 65.9 (62% male). Clients were given financial assistance for gym-memberships. Physical and psychosocial data collected pre and post phase-2 hospital rehabilitation, and at 3 months post gym participation. The AEP also provide training and guidance to gym instructors to increase their knowledge.

Results: At 3 months post gym commencement, 6MWT distance improved from 501m to 549m (+48m or +10%) ($p=0.006$), 1 RM seated row improved from 40.0kg to 43.6kg ($p=0.055$), 1RM leg press improved from 245lbs to 286lbs ($p=0.001$). All SF-36 domains and the physical and mental component scores remained unchanged in the gym setting, while PHQ-9 score (depression screening tool) improved ($p=0.001$). There were zero safety incidents during this trial.

Discussion: Guided gym transition by AEP has been safe and beneficial for people with chronic cardiopulmonary conditions. Physical and psychological outcomes continued to improve beyond the initial hospital rehabilitation program. Gym facilities are an ideal location for chronic cardiopulmonary clients to continue their exercise regimes and provide a positive therapeutic influence on clients' exercise capacity and mood. Working collaborative between hospital and local gym facilities has helped to establish continuous maintenance programs and referral pathways for this cohort.