

The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Trends in Home Health Physical Therapy

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Objectives

By the end of the presentation, attendees will ...

1. *Recognize* the general trends of home health usage during the pandemic
2. *Understand* the trends of discharge to home health during the pandemic
3. *Recognize* the changes in home health expenditure during the pandemic



Introduction

- In March of 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic.^{1,2}
- Hospital admissions began to decline due to cancelation of elective procedures and patient deferral of health services.^{1,2}



Introduction

- An emphasis was placed on home care discharge following acute care because of...
 - the rise in COVID-19 related illnesses/deaths reported in post-acute care facilities.²⁻⁴
 - shortages of personal protective equipment and staffing.²⁻⁴
- The implications of the pandemic has yet to be determined.^{1,5}



Purpose

The purpose of this literature review was to identify the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on trends in home health physical therapy in adults.



Methods

Search Engines:

- CINAHL, PubMed, ProQuest, and Wiley

Search Limits:

- Peer-reviewed articles, English, human subjects, and published between 2019-2022

Methods

Search Terms:

(COVID **OR** “COVID-19 Pandemic”)

AND

(“Physical Therapy” **OR** PT)

AND

(“Home Health” **OR** “Home-Based” **OR** “Home-Based Rehabilitation”)

AND

(Treatment **OR** Intervention **OR** Utilization)

AND

Trend

Methods

Search Criteria:

- Adults (18+)
- Trends in home health during the COVID-19 pandemic



Key Findings

- Examined data sets for Jan. 2019-Oct. 2020 for trends in post-hospital discharge locations and spending for adults.¹
- Patients discharged home with home health increased from 20% (2019) to 21% (Oct. 2020).¹
- By Oct. 2020, use of home health increased, but remained at only 72% of the pre-pandemic rate.¹

Key Findings

- Total monthly spending for home health declined by 41%.¹
 - \$28 million/month (2019) to \$16.5 million/month (Oct. 2020)¹
- Percentage of post-acute care spending on home health increased from 26% (2019) to 27% (Oct. 2020).¹

Key Findings

- Compared data of publicly funded home care in Ontario, Canada for adults²
 - March 2019-Feb. 2020 (before)
 - March 2020-Sept. 2020 (during)

Key Findings

	March '20	April '20	May '20
Admissions ²	-10.2%	-37.8%	---
Discharges ²	+4.0%	-16.6%	-32.0%
PT Services ²	-11.9%	-40.2%	---

Ontario, Canada publicly funded home care²

Key Findings

	March '20	April '20
Comprehensive Assessments ²	-25.6%	-57.7%
Screening Assessments ²	-15.7%	-38.5%

Ontario, Canada publicly funded home care²

Key Findings

	Pre-Pandemic Services	April 2020 Services
Potential Rehab Needs²	21.1%	15.4%
High Rehab Needs²	64.9%	60.4%

Ontario, Canada publicly funded home care²

Key Findings

	Pre-Pandemic Time	April 2020 Time
Potential Rehab Needs²	1.8 hours/month	1 hour/month
High Rehab Needs²	2.6 hours/month	2.3 hours/month

Ontario, Canada publicly funded home care²

Conclusion

There is limited research available relevant to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on trends in home health physical therapy in adults. Further research is indicated.



Limitations

- Inadequate long-term patient follow-up
- Limited amount of pandemic-based home health research
- Specificity of data location²
- Use of data for adults 65 years+ only¹



Future Research

- Patient health outcomes following home health care
- Effects of service changes on unpaid caregivers
- Services placed on hold during the pandemic
- Timely access of home health therapy
- Physical therapist workforce during the pandemic



Clinical Relevance

- The shifts in home health services during the COVID-19 pandemic may have lasting effects on the recipients.
- Some patients may not have received sufficient care, resulting in worse outcomes and increased caregiver burden.



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Questions?