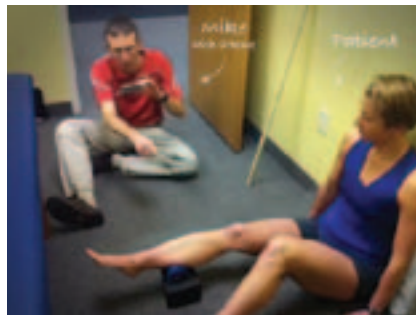




The Impact of Video on Physical

Driving Patient Recovery *and* Grow

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Patient communication and compliance are essential to delivering quality physical therapy and achieving superior recovery results. The author shares his use of video technology to improve service delivery and power referral marketing within his private practice of 7 physical therapists.



AS A PRIVATE PRACTITIONER IN OUTPATIENT PHYSICAL therapy for the past 12 years, I have always believed that quality, individualized care is the only way to practice. I am constantly looking for new and innovative ways to improve every patient's care experience and to help people get better faster with fewer visits. Our practice has made huge progress in this area using video to document patients performing individualized treatment plans. These movement plans address patients' specific

conditions and display the dynamic corrections that each patient is taught for his or her own recovery. We have also found this technology to be a powerful tool to market and grow our business.

“Revisiting the Visit”

Using video allows us to accomplish more in less time and fewer visits. We videotape the patient performing the exercise regimen in the exact way necessary for the maximum recovery impact unique to his or her condition, and post it on a “personal page.” We then email the page for use at home, following all federal guidelines for distribution of patient electronic health information. This allows the patient to “revisit the visit” in the home setting, reinforcing proper execution of the movements and addressing questions raised as the patient engages independently with the home exercise program. We add to the page over time with subse-

Therapy th of Your Practice

BY MICHAEL ROBERTS, PT, MPT, CSCS



quent therapies or answers to new questions that arise as the patient advances through treatment.

Supporting Compliance and Speeding Recovery

Therapeutic outcomes with this type of instruction have been extremely positive. Use of video raises compliance rates of patients engaging in home therapy activities. My practice sends more than 100 videos per month. On average, 85% to 90% of the videos sent are viewed, and many are viewed frequently. We see people less often, patients receive more value in each visit, and they recover faster with the support of instruction readily available to them when they are not in the office. In addition, with 90% to 95% of our patients paying for services through insurance, this reduction in visits helps to ensure that our services fall well within the time and visit limitations set by payers for physical therapy services.

I use Postwire in order to post video directly on a patient's private page, which is like a personal video exercise worksheet.

Many other applications will also allow you to monitor who is or is not watching their video(s) and participating in their exercises, encouraging adherence across the patient population. For the 10% to 15% of my patients who do not view their pages, I know that I have to change my approach or see them more frequently. This raises the quality of care among patients who are less likely to be adherent by addressing their learning styles individually and promptly.

We are now in the process of comparing clinical outcomes for patients who participate with video home exercise instructions with those who were provided traditional written instruction in an outpatient physical therapy setting. I am eager to see quantification of the impact of this new approach, but I have already received many anecdotal positive comments and feedback regarding how the use of video has supported patient recovery.

IMPACT OF VIDEO, continued on page 23

IMPACT OF VIDEO, continued from page 21

Growing the Business Through Referrals

Physical therapy is a referral business. When physicians send patients my way, I share the videos of the patients' treatments with them to keep them informed. This simple act has demonstrated that we are doing something different, which has been eye-opening for the physicians who refer and has increased their referrals. I have been told that our practice stands out in its use of this proactive communications tool. Quality of care and word of mouth are the engines that drive our growth. Our patients also tell us that personal pages differentiate our practice, giving us a lead on our competition.

Tina, a patient with a shoulder injury, used her personal page to guide her home-recovery routine. Typically, I would have seen Tina approximately twice a week for 6 weeks, a total of 12 to 14 visits, but her commitment to home-based care using her personal page cut her visits in half, and she progressed more quickly. Some private practices worry that reducing the number of visits required could hurt their bottom line, but our experience has been the opposite. Our bottom line has improved through referrals. For example, although Tina's visit frequency decreased, she has referred 5 friends. The reduced number of visits by 1 patient has been more than offset by visits from these new customers. Our business has grown by more than 30% annually, mainly through increased referrals by both patients

and physicians, with very little face-to-face marketing. The power of word-of-mouth marketing is astounding.

Providing an Impactful Marketing Lever

I often present at running clubs, triathlon symposiums, state police fitness meetings, and similar events. I use video to demonstrate the power of "before and after" transformations. Use of video paints a clear picture of the impact of treatment and how quickly patients can recover when they follow their treatment plans correctly.

Educating patients on how to follow through on a clear and complete exercise program has challenged our field in the past. The use of video has clearly demonstrated positive outcomes for the patient, including speed of recovery and a reduction in visits and associated costs. For my practice, using video technology has improved our patient-clinician communication, patient compliance, service quality and satisfaction, and the health and recovery outcomes for our patients. It has also fueled our most powerful marketing tool, referrals, by differentiating our practice from other practices and growing our business and bottom-line results. ■

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