

Update: AHS Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation Teleconsult Service for Chronic Pain

Based out of the AHS Chronic Pain Centre in Calgary, the Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation Teleconsult Service for Chronic Pain is a service available to all health-care professionals in Alberta who are seeking more information regarding the management of their chronic pain caseload. The service is also available to rehabilitation medicine students and medical residents. The teleconsult team is comprised of 3 physiotherapists, 2 occupational therapists and 1 kinesiologist. Collectively they have decades of experience in chronic pain, are passionate about what they do, and ready to lend their support via teleconsults.

Callers may request a teleconsult with either a physiotherapist, occupational therapist, or kinesiologist at the time they book the appointment. Support is provided for treatment planning and troubleshooting, information for non-pharmalogical treatment options for chronic pain, early identification of flags for patients vulnerable to developing chronic pain, access to and wayfinding of existing services, and guidance regarding appropriate referrals to the CPC.

The program has a dual purpose, to ascertain the needs of health-care professionals while helping to support best practices. It is an opportunity to collect feedback from the frontlines. The data collected is helping to shed light on what kind of information and support health professionals need to help optimize patient care.

PT and Rehab Teleconsult Service Call Data Summary, Nov. 2016-March 2019.

Total No. of calls:	9
Location of callers:	11% North Zone 22% Central Zone 56% Calgary Zone 11% South Zone
Callers in private or public healthcare:	78% public 22% private
How caller heard of service:	22% AHS CPC Website 22% Physiotherapy AB College & Association 22% unknown 11% CPC Symposium 11% Word of Mouth
Nature of Inquiry:	89 % clinical guidance 33% way finding of services 11% how to refer to CPC 11% other(communicating with interdisciplinary colleagues to encourage earlier post-operative referrals to physiotherapy to help optimize patient outcomes)
Appropriate for Service(Y/N)	100% Yes
Profession of Caller:	44% Physiotherapists 33% Kinesiologists 11% Registered Nurses 11% Medical Doctor
Caller Total Years of Practice:	11% 0- 5 22% 5-10 22% 10-20 22% 20+

Caller Years of Practice in Current Zone:	11% 0-5 22% 5-10 22% 10-20 22% 20+
Callers Who Are Internationally Trained	0%
Profession of CPC Staff Answering Call/Initials:	PT 78%; KIN 11% OT 11%
Time Spent of Calls	Range of 20-40 min Average 32 min

Have there been any trends or surprises in the call data thus far?

Although it is early on in the data collection process, there are some emerging trends. To date the majority of health professionals using the service have been physiotherapists. So far it seems that the number of years practiced is quite an even spread across the early, mid and later periods of their careers. The nature of the calls has mainly focused on clinical guidance and support with additional discussions regarding way finding of services, how to make referrals to the CPC and encouraging earlier referrals from colleagues for post-operative physiotherapy.

To date there have been 9 completed calls. We definitely have the capacity for a higher volume of teleconsults and want to encourage people to access the service. Callers can feel at ease that the service is confidential and conducted with a collaborative, supportive and non-judgmental philosophy.

The service founder, Kate Gerry has some work/volunteer abroad experience in Ethiopia, Haiti and Hawaii in addition to her practice in Canada since 2000. Recently, she attended the WCPT Conference in Geneva, where delegates from 70% of the world’s countries were represented. Thus it would be interesting to have callers that have been internationally trained and students that are currently enrolled in bridging programs regarding their experiences and any insights they might share.

PT & Rehab Teleconsult Satisfaction Survey Summary, October 2016-Mar 2019:

A Survey Monkey with 8 questions (1-7: Likert scale, question 8: open ended) was utilized and there was a 50% response rate. The average time spent by service users to complete the survey was 5 minutes. The feedback from the survey completers is summarized as follows:

- Questions 1: 75% strongly agree, 25% agree they would recommend this service to a colleague
- Question 2: 75% strongly agree and 25% agree that the consult will help with recommendations and treatment planning with patients.
- Question 3: 100% agree that the consultant did their best to help them

- Question 4: 75% Strongly Agree/25% Agree they would recommend this service to a colleague
- Questions 5: 75% Strongly Agree/25% Agree the info. obtained from the consult will help with recommendations & treatment planning for chronic pain patients.
- Question 6: 50% Strongly Agree/50% Neither Agree nor Disagree that the info from the consult may help to decrease or prevent future referrals to the CPC;
- Question 7: 100% Strongly Agree they were able to book an appointment with ease:
- **Question 8: What do health care professionals need most to help optimize care for patients with chronic pain?**
 - Access to case studies/scenarios with screening and intervention tools built in. Access to printable screening tools (not all clients have internet access)
 - Health care professionals need the expertise of the multidisciplinary team to improve the goal setting, expectations and focused treatments for improved health outcomes
 - Access to tools that help improve collaboration (interdisciplinary meetings/group sessions, improved health information sharing/management) will reduce the waitlists.

More about the teleconsult service:

To book an appointment call: 403-943-9900.

Please allow for approximately 30 minutes in your schedule. As a follow-up to the service, callers will be sent a brief questionnaire regarding the quality of your experience including an opportunity for callers to provide feedback and suggestions regarding what knowledge, resources and tools they think health professionals need to optimize care. If you would like to know more about the nature of program please feel free to contact Kate (phone: 403-955-8273, email: kate.gerry@albertahealthservices.ca).

Links:

Chronic Pain Centre, Calgary/Alberta Health Services: There are many tools and resources available for patients & healthcare professionals online.

The AHS Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation Chronic Pain Teleconsult Service:

Inform Alberta: search/'teleconsult' https://informalberta.ca/public/common/index_Search.do

Other Resources:

Towards Optimized Practice: Includes CPGs for Pain, Other/Adult Insomnia, tools/outcome measures for health professionals & patient handouts.
<http://www.topalbertadoctors.org/cpgs>