



## Cancelled elderly exercise sessions during the COVID-19 crisis: can physical therapists help from their homes?

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## Cancelled elderly exercise sessions during the COVID-19 crisis: can physical therapists help from their homes?

Dear Editor,

The quarantines, restrictions and social distance during the pandemic coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19) are major barriers to maintain the long timed therapies for the elderly with no attention paid to this problem [1]. The need for long-termed care services is cancelled also to avoid the risk of infection for both health care providers and patients [2]. The high rate of rapid transmission and thereby death by COVID-19 – especially among comorbid chronic diseased elderly – could increase the risk of mental, psychological and physical health problems [1].

Regular exercise not only improves the mental health and sense of wellbeing but also lowers the risk of respiratory tract infection, anxiety and depression [3]. During the COVID-19 crisis, the introduction of home and community-based care of physical therapy (PT) is very important to patients who could be harmed by cancelled exercise sessions [4] especially with the less effective, highly expensive home mobile rehabilitation applications [5], and the concurrent closure of outpatient clinics of PT in hospitals, health clubs and gyms.

Physical therapists (PTs) can introduce a help to the elderly in this pandemic time even from their home by utilising the online internet technologies that add a social element to exercise performance for those who get depressed or bored during lonely-home training. PTs can generate different home-based exercises – including simple resistance, strengthening, stretching and breathing – *via* scheduled live videos and diagrams *via* social media to the elderly, their caregivers and families.

To guarantee the elderly adherence to home exercise, encouragement and supervision, PTs can create at least 3-week sessions of scheduled live grouped exercise videos across the internet through the available free mobile video conference applications. These applications may be downloaded and prepared on the elderly' smartphones with the assistance of a family member especially for those with a little handling of mobile technologies. If there is no access to

the internet, regular phone calls or messages can be sent by PTs to the elderly and/or their caregivers to increase the awareness of the importance of regular home exercise during The COVID-19 crisis.

PTs and syndicates of PT can regulate national calls on social media about the importance of the home exercise, especially for geriatrics. Finally, governments sent alert messages for staying at home in the early COVID-19 time but other messages containing (stay active at home as well) are needed to be sent especially for elderly on phones, television, facebook and other social media considering all of them a huge mass media reaching with fast easiness to every individual.

### Disclosure statement

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