The Benefits of Early Intervention and Integrated Care Delivery in Occupational Medicine

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Effective Management of Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders

- The goal of effective management of work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMSDs):
  - Prevent worker disability
  - Improve worker morale and satisfaction
  - Reduce healthcare costs
Effective Management of Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders

Employers have begun to search for more effective preventative services and healthcare delivery models to combat the effects of work-related MSDs:

- Early Reporting
- Pre-employment Testing
- Wellness and Prevention
- Changes to Traditional Healthcare Delivery
Effective MSD Management

**Effective**
- Early physical and occupational therapy
- Active interventions that empower the worker to control his or her recovery
- Early return to regular or modified activity
- Patient education that focuses on reducing the fear of activity
- Enhanced communication and collaboration between healthcare practitioners

**Ineffective**
- Bed rest
- Opioids and other strong pain killers
- Passive treatments that focus solely on pain reduction instead of improving function
- Excessive use of imaging in cases without traumatic injuries
- Steroid use for chronic injuries
The Early Intervention and Integrated Care Model

- Active, Functionally-Based Treatment
- Enhanced Communication and Collaboration
- Early Intervention
- Patient Empowerment
Active, Functionally-Based Interventions

- Evidence supports using interventions that require the worker to participate in strengthening, conditioning, and neuromuscular activities that encourage functional recovery.\(^{14}\)

- While passive interventions like electrical modalities can be useful early in the course of care to facilitate active participation in therapy, they are not, in and of themselves, preferred components of rehabilitation.\(^{30-31,33}\)

**Benefits of Active Interventions**

- Reduced Fear-Avoidance
- Reduced Deconditioning
- Improved Work Tolerance
Benefits of Early Therapy

- Improved outcomes
- Reduced Case Costs
- Shorter Case Durations
- Reduced Lost Time from Work
- Decreased Litigation
- Reduced Imaging
- Reduced Injections
- Less Therapy Visits per Case
- Improved Quality of Life Measures
- Fewer Specialist Visits
Evidence

What does the evidence tell us about the Early Intervention and Integrated Care Delivery Model?
Conclusion

- Early referral to therapy, active, functionally-based intervention, patient empowerment, and enhanced communication between providers comprise the Early Intervention and Integrated Care Delivery Model.

- By utilizing therapy to treat MSDs early in the course of care, outcomes, costs, and patient satisfaction can be improved more effectively than with a ‘wait and see’ approach.

- Active, functionally-based intervention can reduce deconditioning and fear-avoidance behavior in the injured worker.

- Collaboration between the medical and therapy personnel is key to optimizing early referral to therapy.
References

3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website 2013
References


References


References


References


