

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:



Effective MSD Management

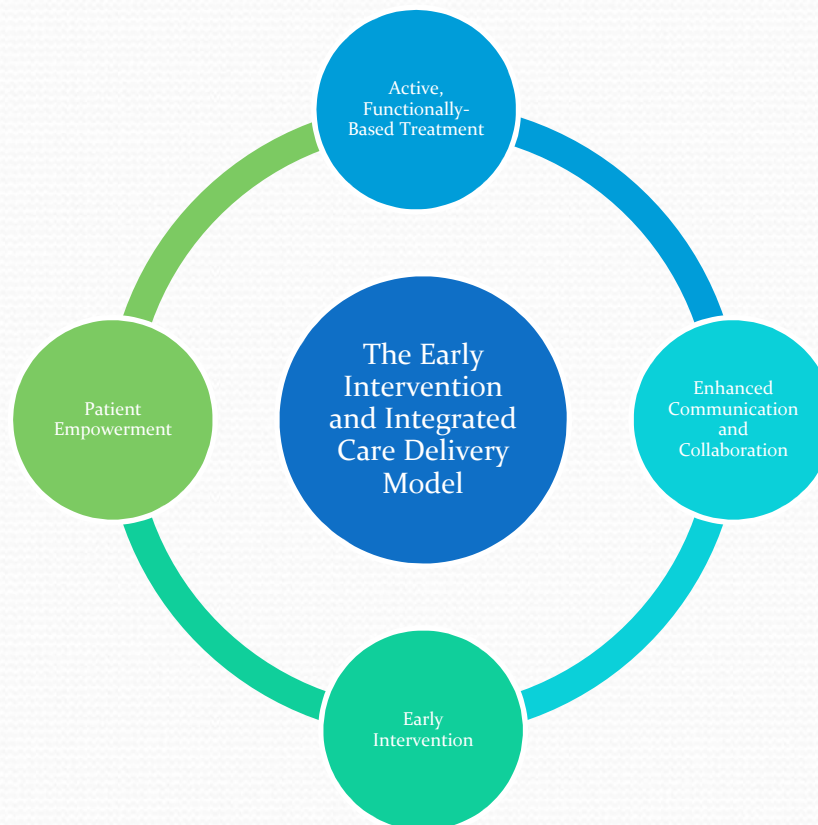
Effective

- Early physical and occupational therapy
- Active interventions that empower the worker to control his or her recovery²⁴
- 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 Interventions

- Evidence supports using interventions that require the worker to participate in strengthening, conditioning, and neuromuscular activities that encourage functional recovery¹⁴
- 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

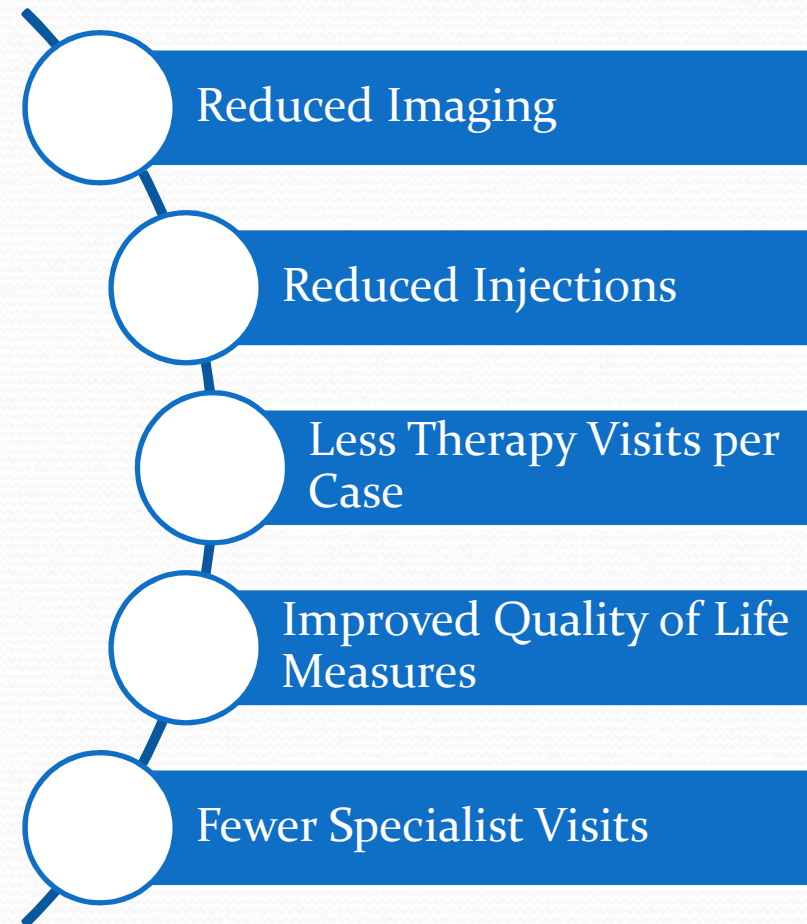
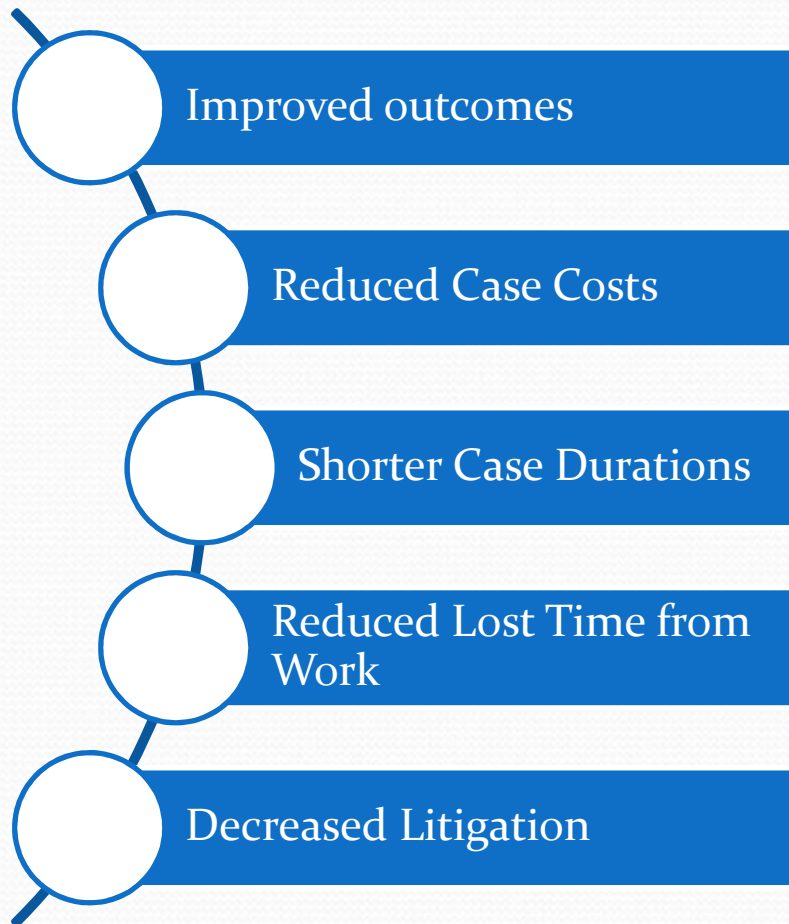


Reduced Fear-Avoidance

Reduced Deconditioning

Improved Work Tolerance

Benefits of Early Therapy



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

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