

Virtual Physiotherapy Services (Telerehabilitation) Following a Work Injury: What Can We Learn from the Experiences of Workers, Physiotherapists and Policymakers? (virtual)

Invited Lectures

Faculty:

Anne Hudon

In March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, physiotherapists treating injured workers shifted their practice towards virtual rehabilitation services, or telerehabilitation. Considering that physiotherapy is uniquely challenged in a virtual setting, given the physical and at times hands-on nature of assessments and interventions, it is unclear if the lack of guidance and rapid adoption of telerehabilitation led to inequitable and suboptimal care for injured workers. This keynote presentation will focus on two research projects that aimed to explore the perspectives and lived experiences of injured workers who received physiotherapy services via telerehabilitation in Canada. Using the Interpretive Description (ID) methodology, data were collected through interviews with injured workers, physiotherapists, and policymakers, and analyzed inductively. Overall, participants expressed nuanced perceptions about telerehabilitation. Some perceived it as a resourceful option for physiotherapy provision during the lockdown, resulting in maintained communications while overcoming barriers to services (e.g., rural/remote, transportation, safety). However, many thought telerehabilitation was inferior to in-person therapy specifically for assessment and when ‘hands-on’ interaction was needed. Importantly, many believed that a hybrid option would be ideal, with telerehabilitation supplementing in-person physiotherapy in different circumstances. Most participants also raised the importance of workers being able to make their own informed choices about the format in which they could receive physiotherapy. Following these results, the keynote presentation will emphasize how these findings can strategically inform current policy and practice decisions on delivery of telerehabilitation services to injured workers, ensuring effective care in the context of physiotherapy and work disability.

About Our Speaker:

Anne Hudon

Anne Hudon, PhD, is a physiotherapist and assistant professor at the School of Rehabilitation at Université de Montréal, Québec, Canada and a researcher at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Rehabilitation of Greater Montréal (CRIR). She completed a Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Sciences on the ethics of physiotherapy care for injured workers, as well as a postdoctoral fellowship on compensation policies and primary care for injured workers with musculoskeletal conditions in four jurisdictions. Her research interests include ethics and equity in rehabilitation,

organization of care, health policy analysis, and the rehabilitation of injured workers and of people with persistent pain.