

GTA Rehabilitation Network Conference, Toronto, 2011

Abstract for Poster Presentation:

Therapeutic Golf Rehabilitation (TGR): Integrating golf into the rehabilitation process across the continuum of care.

Purpose: To establish if and innovative TGR program, integrating golf with the rehabilitation process is feasible across the continuum of care (in-patient, outpatient, community integration, and lifelong health promotion settings).

Relevance: Golf is a popular activity across the lifespan. Many people who suffer trauma or disease identify participation in golf as a goal. Safe and successful return to this leisure activity is a valuable endeavour that brings meaning to the rehabilitation process.

Methods and Analysis: TGR is based on sound principals of rehabilitation including neuroplasticity, motor learning, training principals and performance. The outpatient model of TGR runs for a 6-week duration at a frequency of twice per week. The rehabilitation team includes a physiotherapist, golf professional, kinesiologist and the patient. Other professionals are consulted as indicated. Along with the outpatient setting, in-patient, community and lifestyle TGR programs are described.

Initiative Scope: TGR participants are living with neurological disease or musculoskeletal injury. To date, more than 150 patients have participated in the outpatient model of TGR and over 100 people have benefitted from the community based model. Consultation and training to inpatient settings has been provided to 3 large rehabilitation hospitals across Ontario.

Findings: TGR is a feasible program, popular with persons interested in returning to golf or seeking a new social fitness activity during and post-rehabilitation. It demonstrates sustainability, easy implementation and has the potential for income generation. Participants are consistently satisfied and describe improvements in physical, functional, and golf participation variables.

Discussion: TGR combines meaningful activity with an interprofessional team which leads patients to reduced stigma and return to healthy community activity. Sport specific programming plays a relevant role in rehabilitation, providing opportunity to return to the game or set out on a positive experience with physical activity, social interaction and community closeness.

Conclusions: Integrating golf with rehabilitation through TGR is feasible and provides benefits to patients. It may be implemented at any point along the continuum of care with minimal cost and maximal benefit to the whole person.