Duration of symptoms and outcomes of treatments in musculoskeletal patients in private practice

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Context & Purpose

- Physio First Data for Impact project.
  - Online Standardised data collection system
  - MSK conditions
  - 540 physiotherapists registered; $N=24,590$ patients
- The need to evidence quality
- Limited research evidence

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Method

• Duration of symptoms: ≤6 weeks versus >6 weeks
  • Outcome of referral (Regular discharge and referrals to consultant/GP)
    • Chi square, phi, RR (95% CI)
  • FPS change score
    • T Test, Cohen’s D
• Number of treatments attended
  • Mann Whitney, Correlation coefficient (r)
Results

Patients with DOS ≤ 6 weeks:
• Were 17% more likely to have a regular discharge
• Greater improvement in their FPS scores
• Had fewer treatment sessions

Patients with DOS > 6 weeks:
• 52% more likely to be referred to a GP/consultant
Conclusions and Implications

- Patients who had experienced their symptoms for six weeks or less required *less treatment and experienced better outcomes*.

*Where possible, patients should be encouraged to attend treatment within the first six weeks* of experiencing their symptoms.