

Physiotherapy Outcomes Study: Clinic FAQs

Q1. Why would physiotherapy clinics and physiotherapists want to participate in the Physiotherapy Outcomes Study? What's in it for us?

Client level data will be available to the relevant physiotherapist and physiotherapy clinic to help guide how you treat your clients. You will be able to compare the outcomes of your own clients against national benchmarks of de-identified, aggregated, results.

Q2. What is involved to enter the study?

Each participating clinic will be asked to sign a Memoranda of Understanding with Physiotherapy New Zealand (PNZ) which sets out PNZ's obligations to the clinic and the clinics' to PNZ. Obligations of the clinic include:

- Providing your brand logo to be put on to the survey questionnaires.
- Ensuring physiotherapy staff are aware of the study and consent to their names being sent to Cemplicity (the survey provider) for the purposes of creating the online clinic reporting portal.
- Providing PNZ with a list of all participants who will need access to the reporting portal – either in a 'Super User' or 'Clinic User' role.
- Undertaking to keep logon details and passwords secure and private.

Q3. Do all participants need a unique email address?

All physiotherapists within your practice/business will need a unique email address to be provided with a user login to the reporting portal.

Q4. How long do the surveys take to complete? Does the link time out if it is left open and unattended for some time?

The surveys generally take around 5 to 10 minutes to complete depending on technical literacy. The link does not time out if left open, but if closed and started again the link will be refreshed. This means the client will need to start again if they close a partially completed survey.

Q5. Will participation in the study result in additional work for physiotherapy clinics and physiotherapists?

Following the initial set up, collection of data will require little effort from physiotherapists and physiotherapy clinics because the data will largely be collected directly from clients, through survey questionnaires. This system should ultimately save clinics and physiotherapists time as they are essentially 'outsourcing' collection of outcome measures.

However, recruiting clients into the study will require some additional effort. Collateral for this purpose will be provided, as well as training to assist you as and when required.

Q6. Does the clinic need to do anything to send out follow up surveys?

No, the clinic's only involvement is at the initial survey point. Cemplicity (survey provider) will automatically send out follow up surveys without any input from clinics or physiotherapists.

Q7. What will the initial set-up involve and how long will it take?

You will be provided with a walkthrough document highlighting the key steps to follow to get started. This will include;

1. Adding the study information and survey link into your initial communications which you will send to eligible clients coming in for initial appointments.
2. Educating your staff and clients on the reasons for the study.
3. Accessing the Cemplicity reporting portal.
4. Conducting simple checks to ensure everything is working as expected.

This shouldn't take longer than a couple of hours to complete. PNZ will offer further support and training as and when you require it.

Q8. What if our client base is more complex than some other clinics; will all clients be compared without taking that into account?

Practices will be able to filter their results by key fields such as age and gender in the portal. This will provide practices with the ability to understand how the complexity of client presentation influences their average scores for benchmarking purposes.

Q9. Who can participate in the study?

Any client can participate in the study if they:

- Are 18 years or over.
- Are seeking physiotherapy treatment for a new musculoskeletal condition.
- Are **NOT** seeking physiotherapy treatment for their condition on any of the following ACC specialist rehabilitation contracts:
 - Concussion Service
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Services
 - Pain Management Service
 - Escalated Care Pathway, or
 - Training for Independence.

Q10. Why do clients need to be 18 years of age or over?

There are two reasons:

1. Many of the tools used within the study have not been validated in cohorts under 18 years of age.
2. It avoids issues of consent for people under the age of 18. This requires additional ethical consideration and is not in the scope of the study.

Q11. What type of data will be collected and how will it be collected?

The data will be collected via surveys sent out to the clients before their initial appointment, and then 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months following completion of their initial survey. Data collected will be in the form of:

- Patient related outcome measures (PROMs).
- Patient related experience measures (PREMs).
- Personal details: including name, age, date of birth, ethnicity, gender, post code, area of injury, and contact details.

Q12. Who will be able to see the data collected and how will they use it?

PNZ has contracted a survey provider, Cemplicity, to collect and provide access to data from your clinics' participating clients. Cemplicity will:

- Collect and store the individual identifiable and non-personal data.
- Provide PNZ access to de-identified information for statistical or research purposes. 'De-identified' means that any fields which can identify the client or physiotherapist, such as their name / contact details, have been removed.
- Make the individual identifiable client data accessible in read-only form available to the relevant physiotherapist and clinic, to enable the physiotherapist to consider how the client has responded to treatment. This data will also be available in a downloadable PDF document.

When the study ends, the identifiable data for all clients will be transferred to the relevant clinic to be part of those client's records and deleted by Cemplicity.

All parties, including PNZ and Cemplicity are strictly bound by privacy and confidentiality requirements under the Health Information Privacy Code 2020 and can only use the data collected for the purposes outlined above. The information collected will be used for statistical or research purposes and will not be published in a form that could reasonably be expected to identify any client, clinic or physiotherapist.

Q13. What ACC clients are eligible for this study?

ACC clients can only be enrolled in the study if they are being treated by the physiotherapist under either the Accident Compensation (Liability to Pay or Contribute to Cost of Treatment) Regulations 2003 or an Allied Health Services Contract. ACC clients who are receiving, or who have been transferred to, the following specialist contracts are exempt from the study – Concussion Service, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Pain Management Service, Escalated Care Pathway, or Training for Independence.

Q14. Do I need to collect outcomes measures at the 'discharge' timepoint for my Allied Health Services Contract or Cost of Treatment Regulations (CoTR)?

As the data in version 2 is no longer collected on discharge, ACC have clarified that all clinics under the ACC Allied Health Services contract are expected to record their PROMs as outlined within Allied Health Operational guidelines. *"Providers are expected to collect client outcome measures that are validated and relevant to the client. These should be collected at the initial assessment, regularly during treatment, and on discharge."* The discharge summary should include the GROC and NPRS discharge scores. This should be collected outside of the Cemplicity portal so that they could be provided to ACC if requested.

The other patient related outcome measures to be collected via Cemplicity (survey provider) meet current ACC contractual and regulatory performance requirements.

If the client does not consent to participating, the physiotherapist is expected to collect the outcome measures as per the Allied Health Services Contract or CoTR as they normally would.

Q15. Will the outcomes study affect my accreditation for the Allied Health Services Contract?

The normal process for accreditation will now apply to all clinics under the Allied Health Services contract, this may include reviewing the collection and reporting of client outcomes, in accordance with the outcome measures described in the Allied Health Operational Guidelines.

Q16. What if I get audited by ACC?

The normal process for Performance Monitoring will now apply to all clinics under the Allied Health Services contract, this may include reviewing the collection and reporting of client outcomes, in accordance with the outcome measures described in the Allied Health Operational Guidelines.

Q17. Can participating clinics and physiotherapists opt out of the study at any time?

Yes. From the date any participating clinic or physiotherapist decides to terminate its participation in the study, the process outlined below will be followed (as agreed in the Memoranda of Understanding with participating clinics):

- The participating clinic will advise PNZ of its intention to withdraw the clinic, or a physiotherapist, from participation in the study providing 30 days' notice.
- Existing participating clients will remain in the study until their last wave of surveys is complete (6 months after completion of their initial survey).
- After the 30 days' notice period is complete, no new clients will be recruited into the study by the clinic or physiotherapist that is withdrawing from the study.

Q18. Can we still participate if only some of our physiotherapists want to or are able to participate?

We encourage all physiotherapists that are part of participating clinics to engage with the study. However, there may be instances where this is not possible – e.g., a physiotherapist that treats primarily paediatric clients. In this instance, to be excluded from the study we recommend that you send out your original initial patient email / form rather than the physiotherapy outcomes study initial patient email / form for these physiotherapists.

Q19. What happens if an individual physiotherapist at a participating clinic has opted out of the study, but their client has opted in? Will they still receive survey requests?

If a physiotherapist wants to opt out of the study, the clinic, or physiotherapist would email PNZ (outcomespilot@physiotherapy.org.nz) to facilitate removing their access from the Cemplicity reporting portal. PNZ holds the master list for user access. By removing their access, they will no longer be able to view their clients' information in the reporting portal.

However, the responses of existing participating clients will still be able to be reported on, including by the clinics super users, and they will continue to receive their follow-up surveys. The only method to ensure their new clients are not recruited into the study is to ensure their clients are not provided with the survey link (either via the initial email or QR code).

Q20. Can the client opt out at any time during the study and how do they do this?

They can unsubscribe from the notification messages sent out for the follow ups. This means they will no longer receive any surveys and all data exchange regarding that client will be stopped. However, their completed responses will still be able to be reported on anonymously. Alternatively, if a client does not complete their intake surveys, they are essentially opting out of the study.

Q21. Can clients complete the initial survey on the same day, after their initial appointment?

It is preferable for the client to complete the survey in advance of their first treatment wherever possible. If the initial survey is regularly administered following the treatment session this introduces systematic bias and may reflect negatively in the outcomes or underestimate the effect of physiotherapy.

Q22. What if clients have difficulty or do not want to complete the survey questionnaires on a digital device? Can we use paper-based surveys?

Unfortunately, we are unable to collect paper-based surveys at this stage in the study. However, we will be collecting feedback and analysing how this impacts the data we collect.

Q23. What if the client has more than one injury / complaint?

We are only collecting information based on the client's main complaint, not all the complaints with which they may present. All surveys, including follow ups will be based on the client's primary complaint - taken from the initial survey.

Q24. Can the information collected be altered if the concern changes e.g., the client was referred for back pain but the actual problem is hip pain / Osteoarthritis?

No, we can't change the outcome measure tool delivered once the client selects their region of complaint.

Q25. What if the client presents with a new injury whilst undergoing treatment for the initial concern?

If it is a separate condition that they also require physiotherapy treatment for, they can be offered to start a new survey for this injury. If they are an ACC client, they will need to lodge a new claim. This would involve the client being sent a new initial survey link, or scanning the QR code, to complete the survey for the new injury. Again, the client can decline or opt out from future study participation at any time.

Q29. What if the client gets handed over to another physiotherapist or is being treated by multiple different physiotherapists within the same practice?

Access to individual client data is currently restricted by “site” i.e., clinic location, so physiotherapists will have the ability to search for any client’s responses belonging to their clinic’s service.

Q30. What if a client starts on med-fees and then transfers onto an ACC contract programme which is not eligible for this study (e.g., Concussion Service)?

For the study, we are excluding clients that are on ACC contracts. There is a question in the intake and follow up surveys that asks the client if they are currently on any of these contracts. If they tick yes at any point in their treatment, they will be excluded from the study. However, you will still be able to see the outcomes of any surveys they completed prior to starting on an ACC contract.

For clarification, clients seen by clinics that invoice under the Allied Health Services contract are still included in this study.

Q31. How do we obtain consent from clients for the study?

An optional consent statement will be on the first page of the initial survey. The client cannot proceed without consenting to this.

Q32. Do I need to be a PNZ member to participate in the study?

All participating physiotherapists need to be PNZ members, and business owners who are not physiotherapists are required to be associate members. This is because PNZ is funding the study, and as such want to ensure that its members benefit.

Q33. What can we do to ensure that our client’s privacy is protected?

As physiotherapists and business owners you will already be aware of the importance of protecting client privacy and confidentiality. It is helpful to ensure that you and your staff are familiar with your privacy protocols and training to avoid any breaches in privacy during the period of the study. Some basic things you can do to ensure there are no breaches in privacy when participating in the study include:

- If downloading and printing PDFs off the reporting portal - ensure you do not leave these behind at the printer or in public spaces.
- Ensure you do not leave your computer open and unattended with the reporting portal open and client information visible.

- Only access data of clients that are under your care.
- Set a strong password for accessing the reporting portal.