

How to build a center of expertise for musculoskeletal rehabilitation

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AZ Herentals is a hospital in Belgium which is widely recognized as a center of excellence in sports medicine. Historically in Herentals there was always a close connection between the departments of Orthopedic Surgery and Physical Medicine. In 2018 we had the chance to create a department for musculoskeletal rehabilitation. Because we already had a good network of physiotherapists in the region to refer our patients to, we had the opportunity to focus on specific topics which could be of added value for our patients. We decided mainly to invest in our therapists rather than the newest technology. We assigned a specific joint for every therapist and created units with the orthopedic surgeons for every joint. The aim was to centralise the rehabilitation of very specific orthopedic pathology to assure a standardized rehab protocol and to create a high level of expertise for our therapists on certain topics. For hand therapy, for instance we centralize all patients with flexor tendon repair, we have a wrist school and a weekly briefing with our hand surgeons. For the shoulder, among other things, we have strength, functional and performance testing. For the hip we have a school for patients with great trochanter pain syndrome. For the knee we have created our own strength and functional movement assessment for ACL repair. For the foot for instance we centralize all total ankle arthroplasty patients, as a result of which our foot therapist already had a high level of expertise on this matter. Our new rehabilitation department shows that working closely together with the orthopedic surgeons and investing in the expertise of your therapists can have large benefits.

Biography

Bert Bogaert is a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation physician with a master's degree in Sports Medicine. He is specialised in injury prevention and muscle and tendon injuries and works as a consultant for several professional and amateur football clubs. He works in the hospital of Herentals in Belgium, which is widely recognized as a center of excellence in sports medicine. There he was the founder of a new musculoskeletal rehabilitation center.