

Telerehabilitation for Upper Crossed Syndrome: A Randomized Trial

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Introduction

Upper Crossed Syndrome (UCS) is a common postural dysfunction characterized by muscle imbalances and tightness in the cervical and shoulder regions, leading to pain, stiffness and functional limitations. Traditional rehabilitation approaches for UCS typically involve in-person interventions, including manual therapy, therapeutic exercises and postural education. However, the emergence of telehealth technologies has revolutionized the delivery of healthcare services, offering new opportunities for remote assessment and intervention. This randomized trial aims to investigate the efficacy of telerehabilitation for UCS, comparing outcomes with traditional in-person rehabilitation methods. UCS poses significant challenges for individuals due to its impact on daily functioning and quality of life [1]. Traditional in-person rehabilitation methods have been effective but may face limitations such as accessibility barriers, scheduling conflicts and transportation issues. Telerehabilitation, by leveraging advancements in telecommunication technology, offers a promising alternative that addresses these challenges while providing effective rehabilitation interventions remotely. Telecommunication technologies, such as video conferencing platforms and mobile applications, enable rehabilitation professionals to deliver personalized care remotely, facilitating timely assessment, intervention and monitoring of individuals with UCS. By leveraging these technologies, telerehabilitation has the potential to enhance patient engagement, improve treatment adherence and optimize clinical outcomes while promoting continuity of care and reducing healthcare costs. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of telehealth in ensuring continuity of care and minimizing disruptions to rehabilitation services. With physical distancing measures and restrictions on in-person healthcare visits, telehealth has emerged as a crucial tool for delivering essential rehabilitation services to individuals with UCS and other musculoskeletal conditions. This trial builds upon the momentum of telehealth adoption, aiming to evaluate its effectiveness and suitability for UCS management in both the current pandemic context and beyond [2].

Description

Telerehabilitation, the delivery of rehabilitation services via telecommunication technologies, offers several potential advantages over traditional in-person care, including increased accessibility, convenience and cost-effectiveness. For individuals with UCS, telerehabilitation holds promise as a viable alternative to in-person therapy, providing remote access to expert assessment, guidance and support. Participants in this randomized trial will be recruited from clinical settings and community populations and randomized to

receive either telerehabilitation or traditional in-person rehabilitation for UCS. The telerehabilitation group will undergo remote assessment and treatment sessions conducted via secure video conferencing platforms, guided by licensed rehabilitation professionals. Treatment protocols may include a combination of therapeutic exercises, manual therapy techniques, ergonomic modifications and postural education, tailored to individual needs and goals. Participants in the traditional in-person rehabilitation group will receive standard care consisting of face-to-face assessment and treatment sessions conducted in a clinical setting by licensed rehabilitation professionals. Treatment protocols will mirror those used in the telerehabilitation group, with a focus on addressing muscle imbalances, improving range of motion and enhancing postural alignment. Outcome measures will be assessed at baseline, midpoint and endpoint of the intervention period and will include objective measures of postural alignment, muscle flexibility, strength and endurance, as well as subjective measures of pain, disability and quality of life. Additionally, patient satisfaction and treatment adherence will be evaluated to assess acceptability and feasibility of telerehabilitation for UCS [3].

Moreover, this trial will also assess the cost-effectiveness and patient satisfaction associated with telerehabilitation compared to traditional in-person rehabilitation. Economic evaluations will consider factors such as travel costs, time lost from work or other activities and healthcare utilization, providing valuable insights into the financial implications of adopting telerehabilitation services for UCS management. Patient satisfaction will be evaluated through structured surveys and qualitative interviews, capturing participants' perceptions of convenience, accessibility, effectiveness and overall experience with telerehabilitation. Understanding patients' perspectives and preferences is crucial for optimizing service delivery and ensuring patient-centered care in telehealth settings. Additionally, the trial will explore potential predictors of treatment response and adherence to telerehabilitation, including demographic factors, technological proficiency and social support networks. Identifying factors that influence patient engagement and outcomes can inform strategies for enhancing treatment adherence and maximizing the benefits of telerehabilitation for individuals with UCS. Through rigorous methodology, including randomized allocation, blinded assessments and intention-to-treat analyses, this trial aims to generate robust evidence regarding the efficacy, cost-effectiveness and acceptability of telerehabilitation for UCS management. The findings of this study have the potential to inform clinical practice guidelines, healthcare policies and reimbursement models, facilitating the integration of telehealth technologies into mainstream rehabilitation services and improving access to care for individuals with UCS and other musculoskeletal conditions [4,5].

Conclusion

In conclusion, this randomized trial seeks to evaluate the efficacy of telerehabilitation as a novel approach for managing UCS, comparing outcomes with traditional in-person rehabilitation methods. By leveraging telecommunication technologies to deliver remote assessment and intervention, this study aims to broaden access to rehabilitation services, enhance patient engagement and improve clinical outcomes for individuals with UCS. The findings of this trial have the potential to inform future practice guidelines and healthcare policies regarding the integration of telerehabilitation into standard care pathways for musculoskeletal conditions. Through innovation and evidence-based practice, telerehabilitation holds promise as a valuable tool for optimizing healthcare delivery and promoting the holistic health and

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wellbeing of individuals with UCS. Through collaborative efforts between healthcare providers, researchers, policymakers and patients, we can harness the potential of telerehabilitation to revolutionize rehabilitation practice and improve the lives of individuals with UCS and other musculoskeletal disorders.

Acknowledgment

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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