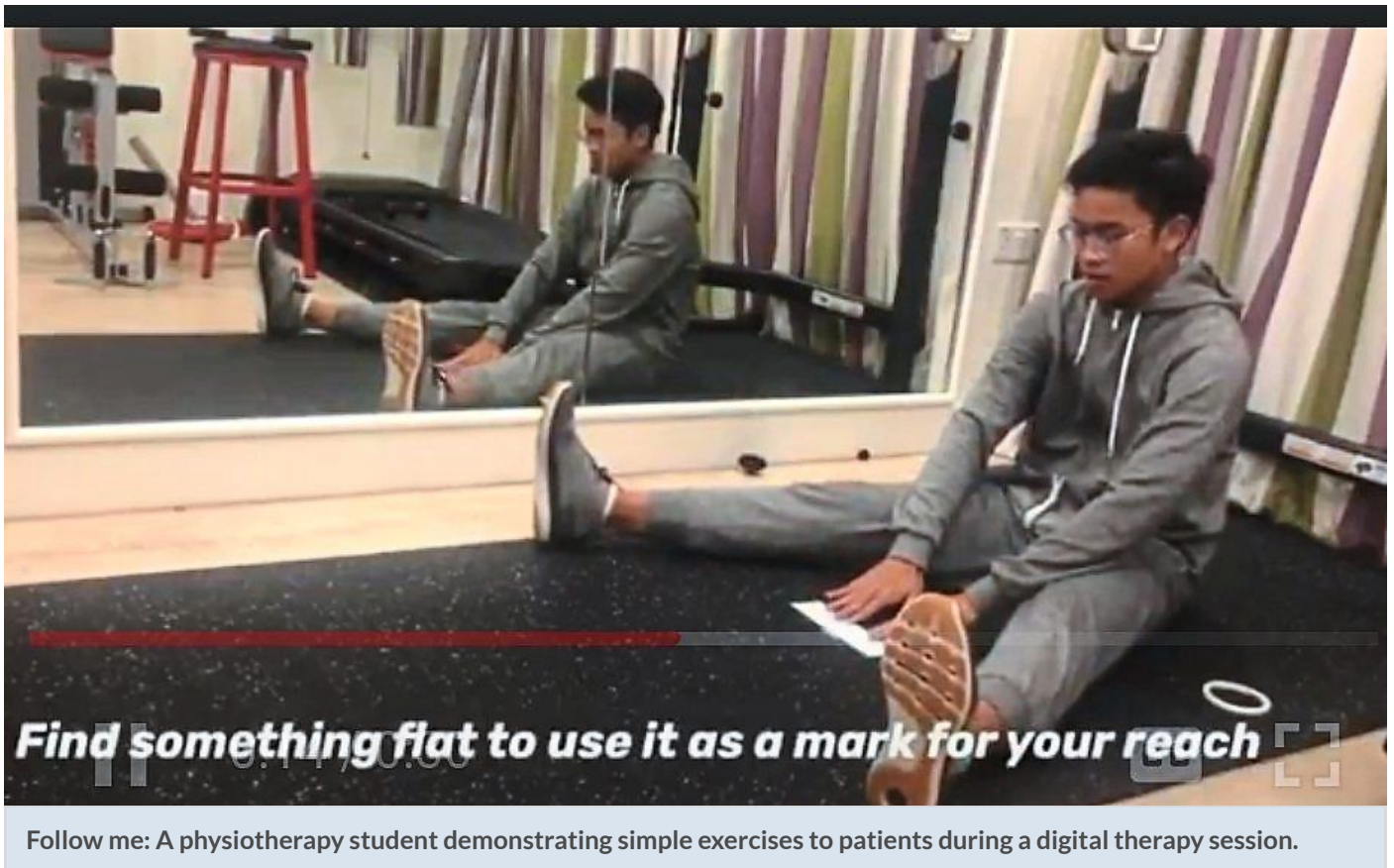


Treating patients virtually



EDUCATION

Sunday, 07 Feb 2021



THANKS to technology, a group of physiotherapy students conducted a community service project without physically meeting their patients.

The members of the INTI International University Student Council (INTIMA) Physio Club recently organised their annual INTI Physio Day (IWPD 9.0) online via Blackboard, INTI's learning management system. Besides health talks, free health screenings, as well as musculoskeletal and cardiovascular assessments were offered to those who joined.

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"The inability to see the patient in a real-life setting made it hard to determine if there were other injuries or problems involved.

"I would say there are still barriers during online consultations, including Internet connectivity, patients' understanding and lack of physical touch," shared the Bruneian.

Meanwhile, INTI International University Faculty of Health and Life Sciences physiotherapy lecturer and clinical coordinator for the physiotherapy programme Yughdtheswari Muniandy said there is much that a physiotherapist can do to assist patients online.

"There is a belief that digital physiotherapy consultations are not as good as face-to-face appointments. I would have to disagree.

"A physical physiotherapy session can take between 40 and 60 minutes, depending on a patient's condition and the complexity of the problem. The same amount of time is spent during a digital physiotherapy consultation, as well," said Muniandy, who was one of the consultants on duty at the event.

"During these online sessions, patients are asked to perform movement assessments for us to better understand their problems. Patients must ensure they have sufficient space and that their cameras are at an angle that will allow the consultant to have a clear view. For complex movements, we have videos with simple instructions for the patients to follow," she said.

She added that patients are then given information on their conditions and self-treatment plans, and prescribed an exercise programme.

INTI International University Faculty of Health and Life Sciences clinical instructor for physiotherapy Edwin Gaspar said despite the lack of physical interaction involved during digital physiotherapy, there were many patients who sought advice on ergonomics.

According to INTI International University head of programme for physiotherapy and senior lecturer Rajkumar Krishnan Vasanti, digital health intervention has the potential to strengthen the coverage and quality of health services. "The key to reaping the benefits is adherence to the therapeutic exercises prescribed.

"Studies have shown that this needs to be combined with convenient care, reminders, information, self-monitoring, reinforcement, counselling, family therapy, telephone follow-ups, psychological therapy, supportive care and education," he said.

Digital physiotherapy benefits are aplenty: saving patients' travelling time and costs, facilitating convenient health provisions within the home environment, and allowing those living remotely or

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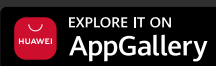
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