



**Validation**Institute

# 2020 Validation Report

**Review for: Virtual Physical Therapists**  
**Valid through March 2021**



# Company Profile

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<b>Category:</b>	Musculoskeletal Management
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://virtualphysicaltherapists.com">virtualphysicaltherapists.com</a>
<b>Year Established:</b>	2016
<b>CEO:</b>	Aideen Turner
<b>Company contact:</b>	VPT-332-2033



## Description:

**Virtual Physical Therapists** is the first to bring telerehabilitation into the palm of your hand. As musculoskeletal specialists, **Virtual Physical Therapists** decided to tackle one of the greatest challenges in healthcare - The burden of Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs). The musculoskeletal specialist must be the first line of defense in treating musculoskeletal problems. And **Virtual Physical Therapists** have even gone a step further, insisting that all clinicians have received certification or diploma in Mechanical Diagnosis and Treatment (MDT).



# Claim Assertion for Validation

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**Virtual Physical Therapists** offers a tele-rehabilitation service, with the goal of delivering high quality care. Patients get video visits and assessments from physical therapists via smart phone. A 2018 systematic review of studies found that research on physical therapy telehealth were of moderate quality and found positive impact on health outcomes. One study included in the review showed cost savings for telehealth physical therapy compared to usual care. The review called for more robust research.

## Intervention link to outcome

- **State the outcome being measured**

Patient scores on a Numeric Rating Scale (NRS), Body Pain Diagram (BPD), and Patient Specific Functional Scale (PSFS) at various points in the treatment process. The application also lists a measure related to office visits, return to work, and patient satisfaction.

- **Has the applicant shown with published literature or other credible sources that the outcome being measured is correlated with the intervention being described?**

The applicant provided a journal article from the International Journal of Telerehabilitation of three case studies where services similar to Virtual Physical Therapists were used.



From a 2018 Journal of Telemedicine Telecare systematic review of English language articles from January 2003 to December 2016, “Validity and reliability studies were identified as having high risk of bias. Intervention studies were of moderate quality and found positive impact on health outcomes and satisfaction. Two studies evaluated costs, with evidence of cost savings in one study. More robust research is required to evaluate long-term effects of telerehabilitation for physical therapy management of musculoskeletal disorders, including cost-benefit analyses.” [1]

## Method / Calculation / Examples

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The analysis measured scores for three patients on validated instruments at day 1, 2, 5, 8, 15, and 90 of treatment. The instruments were the Numerical Rating Scale, Body Pain Diagram, and Patient Specific Functional Scale.

### **Data Source**

- **Describe the data source**

The data source for the NRS, BPD, and PSFS are evaluations performed with the patients. The data source for office visits, return to work, and patient satisfaction is not described.



- **Did the applicant have adequate data from a credible, reliable source?**  
The patient assessments appear to be validated instruments, widely used and recognized for musculoskeletal conditions. We cannot determine what the data source is for office visits, return to work, and patient satisfaction.
- **If the data source is a survey, are there validation studies available?**  
We were able to locate validation studies for the Numerical Rating Scale. For Body Pain Diagram, there appears to be some question about the reliability [2]; (URL to study: [https://www.jmptonline.org/article/S0161-4754\(13\)00105-X/fulltext](https://www.jmptonline.org/article/S0161-4754(13)00105-X/fulltext)) The Patient Specific Functional Scale also has several studies supporting its validity.

We assume the patient satisfaction measure is from a survey, but do not have enough information to determine whether a validated instrument was used.

- **Is the data source appropriate for the outcome being measured?**  
Yes.
- **Comment on the overall quality of data source.**  
These are all good quality data sources for the measures used. The applicant also used them consistently at different time points in the treatment process, creating a good picture of progress.

# Findings & Validation

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The patients all showed improving scores over the course of treatment, and each achieved the score reflecting remission of pain and regain of function.

## Outcome Measure

- **Describe the outcome measure**

The outcome measure for the three patient case studies was the trend in their scores at day 1, 2, 5, 8, 15, and 90th day of treatment.

The outcome measure for office visits and return to work is unclear.

(We do not address the patient satisfaction measure, since its data source and measure were not described.)

- **Is the outcome measure reflecting something important to health improvement, quality of care, and/or value/ financial savings?**

The outcome measure from the validated assessments is an important reflection on the patient's improvement from having received treatment.

Because the measure related to office visits and return to work is unclear, it is difficult to comment. If the measure shows that patients had 30% fewer office visits and achieved results comparable to usual care, then it would show that the intervention is high value. Likewise, a faster return to work than usual care would achieve would also be a source of savings for an employer.



- **Describe the overall approach - a trend from pre- to post-, comparing similar groups, etc.**

The case studies follow three patients from baseline through 90 days of treatment, showing their scores at six different time points. The study does not compare these patients to similar patients receiving usual care.

The overall approach for office visits and return-to-work is unclear. There is no description of how the 30% reduction in office visits was calculated, nor the 25% faster return to work.

- **Did the applicant use the data source correctly to compose the measure?**

For the case studies, yes, the data was used correctly. For the office visits and return-to-work, we cannot determine that from the application.

- **Comment on any issues with compiling the measure, such as missing or incomplete data or lack of data on non-participants.**

The absence of description for the office visit and return to work measures greatly weakens the application. If the applicant compared VPT patients to usual care, they would have a compelling story of high value.





## **Bottom Line**

- **Did the applicant clearly trace a correlation between the intervention, the outcome, and the measure?**

Yes, for the case studies. It's hard to tell for the office visit and return to work measure.

- **Were there significant flaws in the data source, measure approach, or other aspects of the application?**

No significant flaws for the three case studies. We cannot determine how the office visit and return-to-work measures were done, so do not know whether these are correct.

- **Highlights of analysis**

- Use of validated instruments at pre-set time points during treatment.
- Having highly trained staff to work with patients.
- Using widely recognized techniques and approaches in delivering care (e.g. Mechanical Diagnosis and Therapy).
- Creating a novel way for patients to get care and track symptoms.







## Works Cited

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1. Stacey L Grona et al, Use of videoconferencing for physical therapy in people with musculoskeletal conditions: A systematic review, 2018 Jun;24(5):341-355. doi: 10.1177/1357633X17700781. Epub 2017 Apr 12.
2. Danielle Southerst et al, The reliability of body pain diagrams in the quantitative measurement of pain distribution and location in patients with musculoskeletal pain: a systematic review, J Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics 2013 Sep;36(7):450-9. doi: 10.1016/j.jmpt.2013.05.021.





# Validation and Credibility Guarantee

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**Virtual Physical Therapists** achieved level 3 validation for Metrics. Validation Institute is confident that **Virtual Physical Therapists** performs as they state they are willing to provide up to a \$10,000 guarantee as part of their Credibility Guarantee Program\*.

## Level 1 - Savings

Can produce a reduction of health care spend including the cost of the provider. Product/solution has produced, and replicated a lower cost for healthcare overall or a specific component of healthcare

## Level 2 - Outcomes

Product/solution has measurably “moved the needle” on an outcome (risk, hba1c, events, employee retention, etc.) of importance.

## Level 3 - Metrics

Claim is made that – with sourced, overridable assumptions linked to peer-reviewed or government sources

## Level 4 - Contractual Integrity

No outcomes or savings has been shown, but vendor is willing to put a part of their fees “at risk” as a guarantee





# Limitations

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- The analysis did not compare the three patient case studies to usual care patients.
- The analysis did not describe how the office visit and return to work figures were calculated.





**Validation Expiration: March 2021**

# CERTIFICATE OF VALIDATION

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**Applicant:** **Virtual Physical Therapists**  
537 Prestwick Cir.  
Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, 33418

**Product:** Tele-rehabilitation service

**Claim:** Claiming to achieve improvement using  
validated instruments at set time periods

**Validation Achieved:** Level 3 – Validated for Metrics

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**Linda Riddell**  
**VP, Population Health Scientist**  
**Validation Institute**

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**Benny DiCecca**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Validation Institute**





# About Validation Institute

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**Validation Institute** is a professional community that advocates for organizations and approaches that deliver better health value - stronger health outcomes at lower cost. We connect, train, and certify health care purchasers, and we validate and connect providers delivering superior results. Founded in 2014, the mission of the organization has consistently been to help provide transparency to buyers of healthcare.

To strengthen our offering and provide additional credibility around our service, the **Validation Institute** recently announced a Credibility Guarantee\* that offers customers of validated solution providers up to a \$25,000 guarantee. This guarantee confirms that a validated solution provider will, achieve what the validation language on a marketing claim says it will achieve.

