

# Video consults for chronic knee pain as effective as in-person care, study shows

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Australians experiencing chronic knee pain achieve similar pain reduction whether they consult with physiotherapists via video or attend in-person physiotherapy sessions, new research shows, expanding the

scope of treatment possibilities, particularly for people in regional and remote locations.

The research, [published](#) today in *The Lancet*, shows that [knee pain](#) was reduced by 50% on average with video consults, compared to a 48% average reduction with in-person consults, for people with chronic knee pain after three months.

University of Melbourne Professor Rana Hinman from the Department of Physiotherapy led a clinical trial of 394 adults experiencing knee problems consistent with knee osteoarthritis who were managed by 15 physiotherapists across 27 Australian clinics—190 participants were treated via video consults, and 204 in-person in clinics.

Both groups had five consultations over three months to help improve [muscle strength](#), physical activity and knowledge around managing their condition. Participating physiotherapists received [video conferencing](#) training before the trial.

Professor Hinman said the results give Australians with mobility issues and those in remote parts of the country a convenient means to access [physiotherapy](#) care.

"Around 22% of Australians aged 45 and over have osteoarthritis, with the knee being the most common joint affected. It is a very common, and sometimes debilitating complaint, for many," Professor Hinman said.

"Until now, there has been limited research comparing video conferencing consults head-to-head with in-person physiotherapy sessions for people with chronic joint pain.

"This research shows that for people with chronic knee pain, who often

have [mobility issues](#) or live in regional and rural parts of the country, videoconferencing with a physiotherapist is as effective as an in-person consultation—but without the inconvenience of traveling to a clinic.

"This opens up avenues for those people who may require ongoing physiotherapy to manage chronic knee pain."

Professor Hinman said it also points to the need for telerehabilitation training for physiotherapists in the future.

"This research builds on previous work and has ramifications for the industry around how [rehabilitation services](#) for musculoskeletal complaints can be delivered," Professor Hinman said.

"It also shows that telerehabilitation training is warranted for physiotherapists, to be able to expand on the care and support they already provide in-person."

**More information:** Rana S Hinman et al, Telerehabilitation consultations with a physiotherapist for chronic knee pain versus in-person consultations in Australia: the PEAK non-inferiority randomised controlled trial, *The Lancet* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736\(23\)02630-2](#)

Provided by University of Melbourne

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