

## **CREATING AN EVIDENCE-BASED PULMONARY REHABILITATION PROGRAM**

Hi there LungFIT listeners, on today's episode, I want to tell you about a course that we have just launched at the university of British Columbia called creating an evidence based pulmonary rehab program. So I thought I would talk a little bit about the course, why I put it together, what it's got to offer and hopefully encourage you to register but even if you're not able to do that, it hopefully will also just get you thinking a little bit about your pulmonary rehab practice and the areas of our programs that we might need to spend a little bit of extra attention on. So, why did I do this course? Well, really this course was a labor of love in many ways. I have been working in pulmonary rehab for a very long time. I started a pulmonary rehab program when I was first a clinician as a physiotherapist. I nurtured it over a long period of time. Now I don't work in the program clinically anymore, but I'm certainly very involved in research and teaching related to pulmonary rehab. And of course, this podcast is something that I had also wanted to do for a long time.

But in all of these travels related to pulmonary rehab, I have heard from lots of clinicians that there's just not that many courses out there that clinicians can take when they want to get a pulmonary rehab program started. There are certainly different kinds of courses related to pulmonary rehab that talk about the evidence, that talk about different aspects of you know, best practices but what was potentially missing from some of the other things is just that real day-to-day "How do I identify who my patients are?". You know, those sorts of day-to-day questions around, "how do I create the form?" "How do I structure the program?" "What kind of things I need to think about when we actually start assessing patients?" So that's what this course is about. It's called creating an evidence based pulmonary rehab program, and it really is about the basics. It really is about that step-by-step approach to putting together your program. So, what kind of topics are we covering in this program? Or in this particular course?

Well, first of all it is an online course. And so there are some sections in the beginning just about getting familiar with an online learning environment and we're using canvas for this learning environment. So, if you're not familiar with that, there's a few things just to go through about being comfortable with the canvas environment, the whole course is structured in a series of modules. And so, the idea is that you can be very self-paced as you go through it. I've opened it up for, you know, about a month or so in terms of active involvement with the course, but you could maybe finish the course in a shorter period of time. You could potentially have to do it over a couple of months. Some of the aspects of the course require you to meet with people in your community to find out more about what is needed in pulmonary rehab. It requires you to create forms. It requires you to think about referral pathways. So, for some of you, these things are going to be pretty straightforward. You're just going to be able to maybe adopt the typical practices that you have in your hospital setting or in your healthcare setting. But for other people, you know, you're really, really starting from scratch and you really need to think about every single step around how someone is going to find out about the program, be referred to your program, go through the whole thing, discharge et cetera.

So then basically the idea is that these modules allow you to go through each section, do what you need to do and then continue on. So I haven't put particular dates to any parts of the course. I think it would take about four weeks if you went through it steadily. But you know, again, you have a bit of

flexibility, a lot of flexibility in how you move through the course. So what are the topics of the modules? Well, in the first main module, I actually go through a little brief history of pulmonary rehab. I think a lot of us maybe appreciate that it has been around for a while, but maybe don't have that understanding of the actual roots of this particular intervention. So, I just have a very brief overview of the history of pulmonary rehab.

The next module talks about the evidence supporting pulmonary rehab. And if you've been listening to this podcast for any length of time, you know, that it is an important part about being a clinician is to be able to actually read the research evidence. And so, not only do you want to do that to increase your skills as a clinician, but you also want to have an understanding about the specific evidence supporting pulmonary rehab, if you're going to be offering it to patients, or if you're potentially going to be talking to stakeholders to encourage them to support this program, so it would take too long to go through, of course, all of the evidence or even the main papers. But what I've done is I have selected four papers that cover really the key evidence in pulmonary rehab. And then there are some additional resources provided for you as well, but I haven't just given you these papers.

I've actually added a section here about how to read a paper. So part of going through this module is reading the evidence, but also learning how to read the evidence. And so I've show you how you can do that. Using these guides, there's some videos in there for you to watch. I've created some worksheets and even completed one as an example. And then you can actually test your knowledge of that paper in this module as well. So, it's more than just reading about the evidence it's actually increasing your skills around how to read evidence and you can apply those skills to really any research paper that you come across.

The next section is focused on quality and again, part of the evidence base, we really want to make sure that the programs that we offer are of good quality. And I know that sort of seems like a self-evident thing. Of course, we do but I really want you to think carefully about what makes a quality pulmonary rehab program. And why is it important that you offer something that has a strong evidence base and is good quality? And I think one of the most obvious reasons to me, but maybe it might not be as obvious to you is just that if you want people to refer to your program and you want patients to report back to their doctor that referred them, you really want to make sure that the patient was able to experience the best program possible. Now, of course, not all patients are going to get the same kind of benefit. There's lots of individual reasons why one patient might get a huge benefit from pulmonary rehab and another won't. But nevertheless, you know, you want to know that the program was able to really do what it could to maximize a person's potential. And so, a lot of those issues are related to quality. And so, the next module after the evidence module is really talking about quality. And for that, we actually talk about the quality indicators, which was a source or a previous podcast or a series of podcasts that we did for this LungFIT podcast. So, for some of you, it might be a, a review, but for others it might be quite new information to think about what are the indicators of quality that we want to see in a pulmonary rehab program.

Once you go through that module, then you're going to be really starting to think about the first decisions about your program. And you might not be able to get it all figured out, but we're going to start to probe you or, or encourage to start thinking about, well, where are we going to offer it? And

where's the space and how many times a week? And what staff are involved? So, that module is really starting to get you to think about those main logistics about offering your program.

Then the next module is around how participants are going to access your program. So those participants are really going to have a very clear pathway from where they are now to being a participant in your program. So how do they do that? Well, this is kind of an interactive approach between you and the people that you hope will be referring to you. So you need to identify who those sources of referral are. They might be specialists, they might be allied health professionals. They might be the patients yourself. You need to identify those people and you need to go and talk to them. And start talking about who they have in their practice that they think would be suitable for pulmonary rehab, and that they would be willing to refer to you because without a strong referral pathway and without an identified patient population, your program just won't succeed. You might get a few referrals to begin with just because it's a bit of a word-of-mouth thing, but if you don't have that strong and sustainable referral base, then your program won't succeed. And we do actually find this with pulmonary rehab programs is that they shut down because they don't have enough referrals. So, this is really important in steps to take right at the beginning, before you do anything, you got to know that you have the support of the referring community, that they understand your program. You can talk about the patients that you're going to see. So, we take you through those steps to figure all that out. Then, once you actually have patients in your program, you do need to do a detailed assessment.

And so, the next module talks about assessing your patients and interpreting what particular measures and other kinds of tests you've done with them. So, a lot of this will be very familiar to you. If you have worked in healthcare, you know, you understand the process of taking, say a medical history and talking to the patient about their goals and interests around rehab, but there are some specific tests and measures that we use in pulmonary rehab. And I'm going to introduce those to you in this particular assessment. And then you're going to go and actually practice them on your own. And we have videos and other types of teaching tools to really demonstrate those tests and measures to you.

The next module talks about the education curriculum and there's lots of great resources out there. So, you're going to go over different types of education packages and select one for your program.

Then you're going to tie it all together. You're going to figure out your equipment. You're going to confirm other resources that you're going to need. You're going to create brochures and other materials that you need to actually get the word out about your program.

And then you're going to wrap it all up by thinking about, you know, the next steps in your learning and what more do you need to do in order to be able to launch. So, the idea with this is that this is a really detailed course that focuses on planning. So, you have been charged or you have decided to start a pulmonary rehab program and you need to start from square one. This will take you through the square one, square two, step three, step four. So, it will really help you build all of the things that you need to get your program going.

After this course is done, what we plan to do is then offer a series of webinars to talk a little bit more about the actual process of delivering the program. So, you know, different kinds of exercises that

you could provide, how you handle breath control or low oxygen. Those I think are best delivered and more of a kind of a face-to-face way, even if it's through zoom. But it will allow me to be able to talk about some of these things that maybe are a little bit more complicated and take questions and be able to actually have a really interactive session that allows more discussion. So, this course is really focused on planning your program and understanding what you need to do to get going. And then after that, there'll be a series of webinars that really will help you build your skills in actually running your program.

So, you might ask yourself, well, do I need to take this program if I already have a pulmonary rehab program going? And I guess that's—obviously—up to you, if you feel really comfortable in all aspects of your program, you know, you're getting good referrals, you have all of the information, you know how to do exercise testing, you know how to prescribe exercise from those tests, you know your education sources are solid. Then you might find that there's a lot in here that you already know, and it wouldn't necessarily, you know, help you in running the program that you already run. But if you're kind of wondering, well, you know, we don't really use outcome measures that much, or, you know, what other education materials are out there, or even we are noticing that our referrals are slipping a bit, or we've never really planned that part of the program in terms of thinking of who else we could be providing rehab for. Then of course there might be many aspects of this course that you would find super helpful. So, of course, you would be welcome as well. You probably would be best placed to get a lot out of this program if you do have a background in healthcare of some kind, because we do talk about things like doing a patient assessment, and I'm making some assumptions that you have a comfort level with talking to patients and getting a history and being able to take basic measures. So, I think that it would be suitable for those that have a program, but it is definitely geared to people who are really needing to get a program up and running. And that's what we developed this course for.

So, I really do encourage you to look at the course website. And if any of this is interesting to you and you think that you want to apply, we really would encourage your registration and you know, stay tuned for the next parts of this course where we're going to have those webinars and feel free to join in on those. If this, course doesn't really meet your needs, but you're interested in other kinds of continuing professional development, maybe those webinars would be of interest to you.

So, I'm going to put the registration link into the show notes for lung fit and feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions about the course. And I really look forward to meeting you, if you do decide to join us. So until next time, thanks so much for listening and we'll talk to you soon. Bye for now.