

7.04 PR Plus+: Maintenance programmes following Pulmonary Rehabilitation: The patient perspective

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Background: Pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) is the recognised gold-standard of community-based care for chronic respiratory conditions¹ but long-term gains in patient wellbeing are not sustained.² Community-based exercise maintenance programmes have shown promise in addressing this issue³ but there is an absence of qualitative patient data informing same.

Methods: Participants who had completed a programme of PR within the previous 18 months at HSE Primary Care centres in Limerick and Ennis were invited to participate in focus groups discussing PR maintenance programmes.

Results: Seventeen participants (female:n=9(53%); mean(SD) age:68.8(10.1) years) took part in four focus groups (three in-person, one online) in July, 2023. All participants reported a positive PR experience, but most failed to maintain exercise habits afterwards. All participants were enthusiastic about maintenance programmes, which they thought should be led by a trained health/fitness professional. Six-eight week rolling blocks to be accessed within one-two months post-PR, comprising exercise and social components were preferred. Educational sessions were favoured by some, with others finding these boring and repetitive. Light-touch ongoing assessment to monitor progress was preferred. In-person settings for maintenance classes were overwhelmingly favoured.

Conclusions: Patient insights about PR maintenance programmes provide useful guidance for policy makers considering provision of this service.

Keywords: Pulmonary Rehabilitation; maintenance programmes, exercise.

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