

Tele-rehabilitation for people with dementia in the COVID-19 pandemic: A case-study

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The Promoting Activity, Independence and Stability in Early Dementia (PrAISED) is an individually tailored programme of physical, dual-task exercises, and functional activities of daily living for people living with dementia

The programme is delivered at participants' home by a multidisciplinary team including physiotherapists, occupational therapists and rehabilitation support workers for a year

As a result of COVID-19, the PrAISED multidisciplinary teams were unable to visit participants in their homes and delivered the intervention through a National Health Service-approved video-calling platform named Q Health: <https://qhealth.io/>



Interviews were conducted with five participants with dementia, five caregivers and five therapists to identify the circumstances where Q health worked best, its benefits and challenges

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic requires innovative ways of delivering rehabilitation. This study supports that people with dementia can use tele rehab, but success is reliant on having a caregiver and an enthusiastic and known therapist.

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When Q Health worked best

- When users had a carer present
- When therapists showed enthusiasm and creativity
- When good rapport existed between therapist and client

Benefits of Q Health

- Time-efficiency of sessions (e.g. no travel required to participants' homes)
- Enhancing participants' motivation by doing the exercises with the therapists in real time (e.g. compared to phone support only)
- Boosting caregivers' dementia awareness and therapists' creativity



Challenges of Q Health

- Users' poor IT skills (e.g. generational or due to cognitive impairment)
- Lack of infrastructure and support for some users (e.g. no internet, computer, living alone)

