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4-25-2022

The Shifting Role and Expectations of Physical Therapy in the Pediatric Cystic Fibrosis Clinic During a Global Pandemic

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Recommended Citation

Cairns, Ana; Wyatt, Colby; Chaloner, C; Takatsuki-Jordan, J; and Williams, A, "The Shifting Role and Expectations of Physical Therapy in the Pediatric Cystic Fibrosis Clinic During a Global Pandemic" (2022). *Costas T. Lambrew Research Retreat 2022*. 3.
<https://knowledgeconnection.mainehealth.org/lambrew-retreat-2022/3>

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The Shifting Role and Expectations of Physical Therapy in the Pediatric Cystic Fibrosis Clinic During a Global Pandemic

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Introduction

- In January 2020, a CFF supported quality improvement study to optimize physical therapy (PT) services in our pediatric CF clinic was underway.
- An initial survey had been completed in 2019 to assess family satisfaction with the current provision of PT services.
- In March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic caused a major shift in clinical care in the midst of our project.
- Care was changed to telehealth and “hybrid” clinic visits, thereby altering the context of our study, necessitating a change in the focus.

Objective

How has the transition from traditional in-person annual visits to telehealth/hybrid clinic visits impacted family satisfaction with PT services in clinic?

Methods

- Initial survey was created within the RedCAP platform by a team including PT, a patient advisor consultant and research navigator.
- Survey consisted of 8 questions answered on a Likert scale from 0 (not at all satisfied) to 6 (completely satisfied).
- Surveys were given to families during clinic visits on iPads or via email for completion at home.
- After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the same survey was redistributed.
- Follow-up surveys were given to families via an online link during their telehealth/hybrid clinic visits (via Zoom) or via email for completion at home.
- Data was analyzed by an institutional statistician for changes in family satisfaction in the context of on-going clinical adaptations because of the risks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results

- A Chi-Square test with continuity correction and Fisher’s exact test was completed to analyze frequencies of the Likert data collapsed into two categories:
 - Rating 0-4 (least satisfied)
 - Rating 5-6 (most satisfied)
- There was a significant difference ($p = .041$) in ratings between the 2 surveys for only one question: “I am satisfied with the clinic’s PT service.” (82% 2019; 97% 2021).
- On both surveys parents were:
 - Least satisfied (77% 2019; 80% 2021) with their ability to follow-up with the PT after a clinic appointment.
 - Most satisfied (98% 2019; 100% 2021) with the ability to ask questions during a PT visit in clinic.

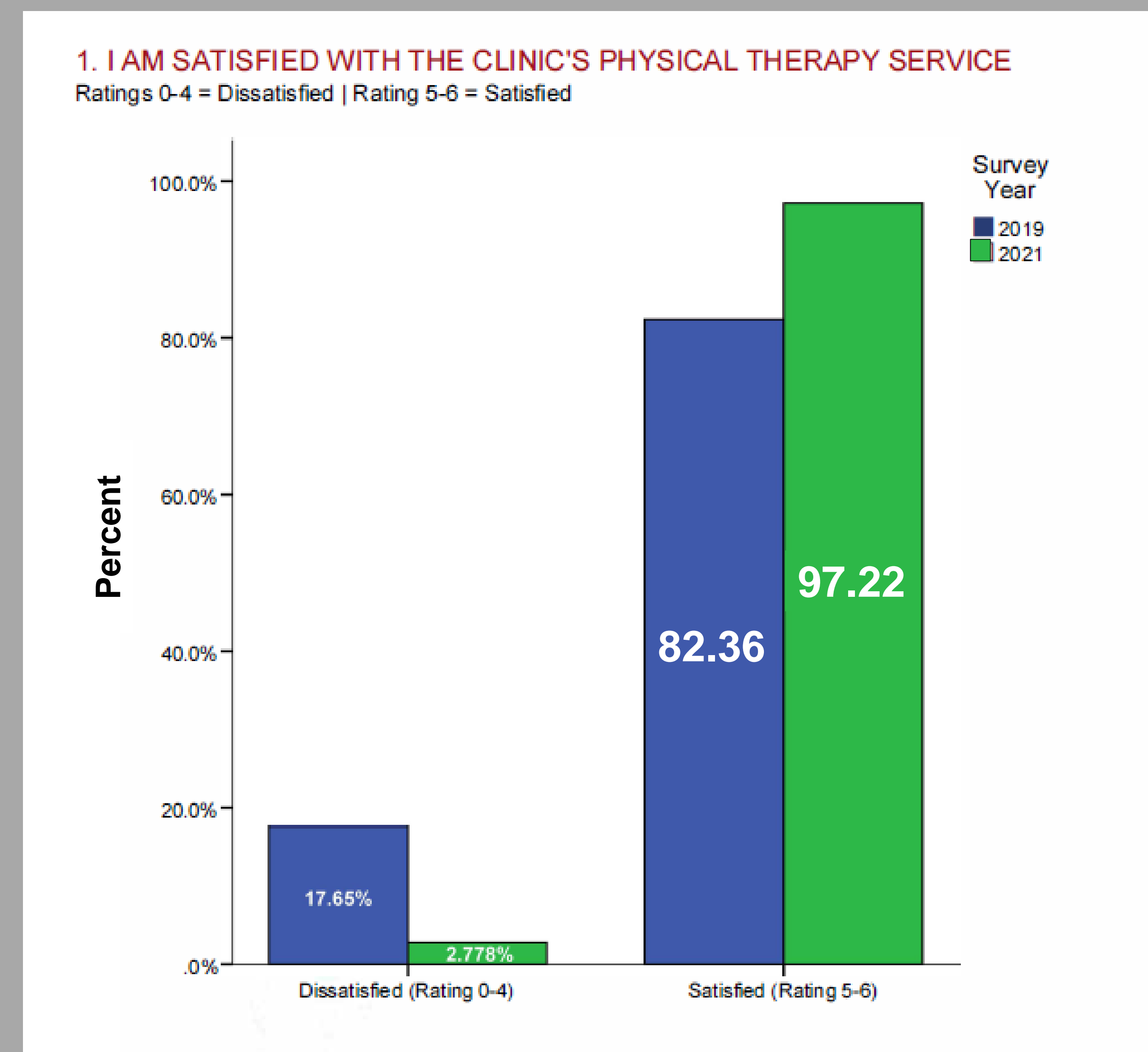


Figure 1. Significant improvement in overall family satisfaction with PT services from 2019-2021.

	2019 Survey	2021 Survey
Total # of families responding	51	36
Gender of children		
Male	39	22
Female	20	20
Age range of children		
0-5	15	9
6-10	13	11
11-15	27	20
16+	4	2

Figure 2. No significant difference in age or gender of children in families who completed the survey.

Conclusions

- Significant improvement in overall family satisfaction with PT services despite the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Increased provision of home exercise resources
 - Increased ability for PT to check in with patients during every telehealth visit due to decreased visit length
 - Creation of step-by-step vest programming instructions for home use
- Despite increased email communication via telehealth appointments, families remained least satisfied with their ability to follow-up with PT.
 - Only 0.34 FTE dedicated to CF Clinic per week
 - Limited ability to address patient concerns outside of clinic hours
 - Both clinic PTs have inpatient caseloads

Acknowledgements

- CFF Award for a Physical Therapist
- Maine Medical Center Rehabilitation Medicine Department
- MMP Pediatric Pulmonology
- MMC Development - Lisa Van Dyk, Grants Officer
- Linda Simonsen, PT - patient advisor consultant
- MaineHealth Operational Excellence – Ruth Hanselman
- MMCRI – Wendy Craig, Lee Lucas, Tony Molina