Digital Health Corner by Genie Health

Can AI/Machine Learning Make Physical Therapy Valuable in the Healthcare Marketplace?

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I have written, in past Editorials for IJSPT, regarding the fact that a significant body of literature has demonstrated that a 'physical therapy first' approach to the majority of musculoskeletal (MSK) problems in our patient populations is the most effective way to reduce the total MSK spend by employers and payors. The latest data continues to show that MSK costs are amongst the highest alongside pharmaceuticals and cancer treatments for all payors and that the spend on MSK treatment of our populations is continuing to climb. The most powerful way to increase the recognition by the payors, who fund healthcare providers, about the importance of physical therapy services [e.g. pay for the provision of therapy] is for our community to produce more data around cost reductions for a 'therapy first' approach. However, in order to achieve higher quality data on the value proposition of this 'therapy first' approach, we, as a community, need to have greater standardization in our diagnostic assessments and corrective exercise prescriptions for our patients. But *how* do we achieve this goal?

First, no algorithm for screening human movement is "perfect". Functional Movement Systems (FMS) is the gold-standard in our industry for screening and assessing human movement. There are over 600 publications from investigators whose research is derived from FMS' methodologies. Many of us have been certified and have taken continuing education courses on the FMS System. However, the challenge to adopting FMS assessments and prescriptive corrective exercises within our clinical practices is that it is difficult to master. It is my assertion that technology is needed to deploy functional movement screens 'at scale' so that our greater community of providers can standardize our evaluation of MSK disorders and treatments and enable us to generate the type of data that payors are seeking. This 'movement' towards standardizing data that validates the importance of therapy in controlling MSK spend is critical to the well-being of the physical and occupational therapy profession.

Genie Health is working closely with FMS to build the technology into our platform that will enable therapists, trainers and chiropractors to deploy FMS assessments virtually or in-person through client/patient smart devices. Our platform will ingest the data and derive prescriptive corrective exercises based on the results of the individual's assessments. This achievement is a significant step in the MSK space towards the "holy grail" of predictive care, the ability to assess a person and 'diagnose' their MSK disorder and predict the outcome of treatment success for specific rehab programs. Genie Health is committed to strengthening the position of therapy providers, trainers and chiropractors in the MSK healthcare marketplace. Stay tuned....

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