

# 2012 Military Health System CONFERENCE



## The Effectiveness of Physical Therapists Serving as Primary Care Musculoskeletal Providers as Compared to Family Practice Providers in a Deployed Combat Location. A Retrospective Medical Chart Review

The MHS: Healthcare to Health

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## Physical Therapy Practice Pattern Utilization

- Primary Care Providers (PCP)  
Musculoskeletal
  - Privileged for direct access care, limited prescription and imaging utilization.
    - Practice model norm in deployed locations
- Efficiency and Safety
  - Increased return to duty rates.<sup>1</sup>
  - Low risk of missed diagnosis or intervention?



# PTs as mPCM Compared to FP



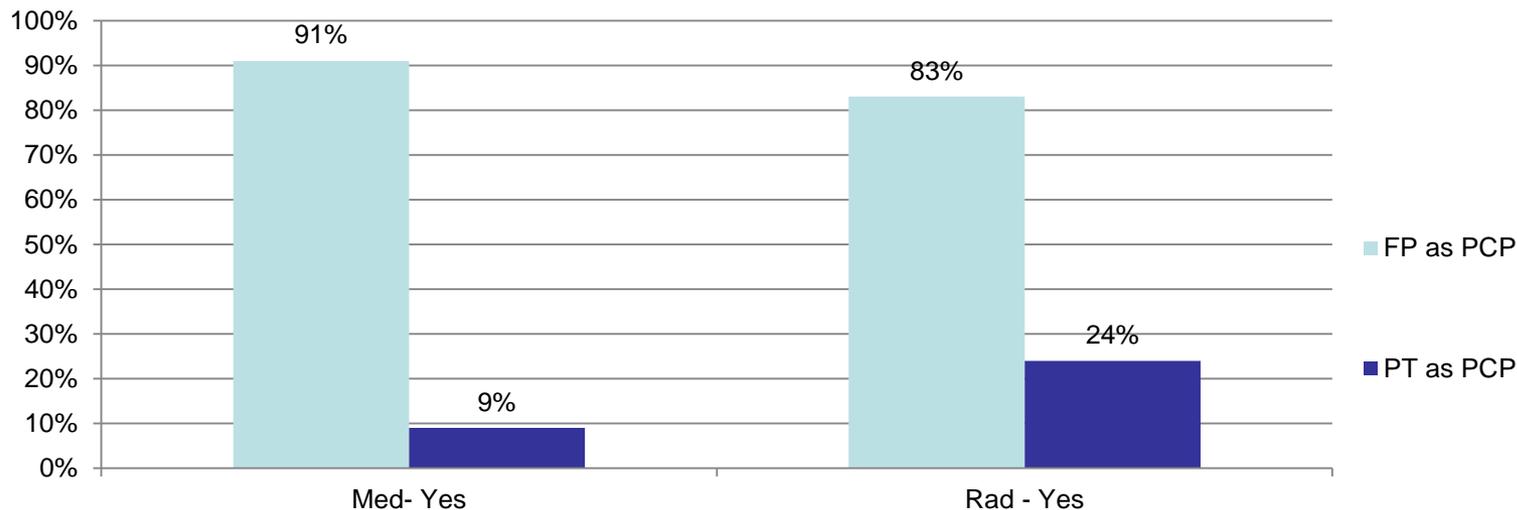
- Hypothesis
  - Meds and imaging utilization will be sig. less when PT's are utilized as PCP/musculoskeletal patients
  - Increase in RTD rates
  
- Methods
  - A Retrospective Chart Review
    - Examine effectiveness of PT compared to FP
  - Compare 1 PT to 2 FP Physicians
    - Random selection of 150 charts (AHLTA)
    - Age, gender, RTD rate, Med/Imaging Utilization

# PTs as mPCM Compared to FP



## Results

Males (126), Females (23), Age 19-54, M = 29, (P-Value = <.0001)



- 50% increase in RTD rate. Results significant PT as PCP (P-Value = <.0001).
- No significant difference in the number of visits between groups.

# PTs as mPCM Compared to FP



## Discussion

- PT's can practice as musculoskeletal PCP.  
Safe and effective practice patterns.
- Deployed model easy to implement DoD wide.  
Maintain PT's deployed skill set.
- Decrease musculoskeletal load on PCP.  
Decrease need for additional FP PCP in a deployed setting.

## Limitations

- Liability inequalities

## References

- Deyle, G.D. (2006) Direct access Physical Therapy and Diagnostic Responsibility: The Risk-to-Benefit Ratio. *J Orthop Sports Phys Ther.* 36(9):632-634.
- Pendergast J, Kliethermes SA, Freburger JK, Duffy PA. (2011) A comparison of healthcare use by physician-referred and self-referred episodes of outpatient physical therapy. *Health Service Research.* Article first published online: 23 SEP 2011. DOI: 10.1111/j.1475-6773.2011.01324.x