

The persistent nature of health problems and the significant societal costs in patients recovering from COVID-19 require continued attention to the treatment of these patients

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One year evaluation of patients recovering from COVID-19 receiving treatment from a primary care allied health professional

BACKGROUND

Approximately **1 in 8 people** who had a SARS-CoV-2 infection develops **persistent symptoms**.

The Dutch government arranged **increased reimbursement** for primary care services by allied health professionals, to combat the negative **impact of persistent complaints after COVID-19** on daily life.

OBJECTIVES

- To describe the recovery trajectories of patients recovering from COVID-19 who visited a primary care allied health professional;
- To explore which baseline characteristics were associated with recovery over time;
- To gain insight into the patients' healthcare and societal costs.

RESULTS

1,451 patients receiving treatment by one or more allied health professionals were included

- physical or exercise therapy (n = 992)
- occupational therapy (n = 364)
- dietetic therapy (n = 223)
- speech and language therapy (n = 115)

Mean age was 49 (SD 13) and 64% was female.

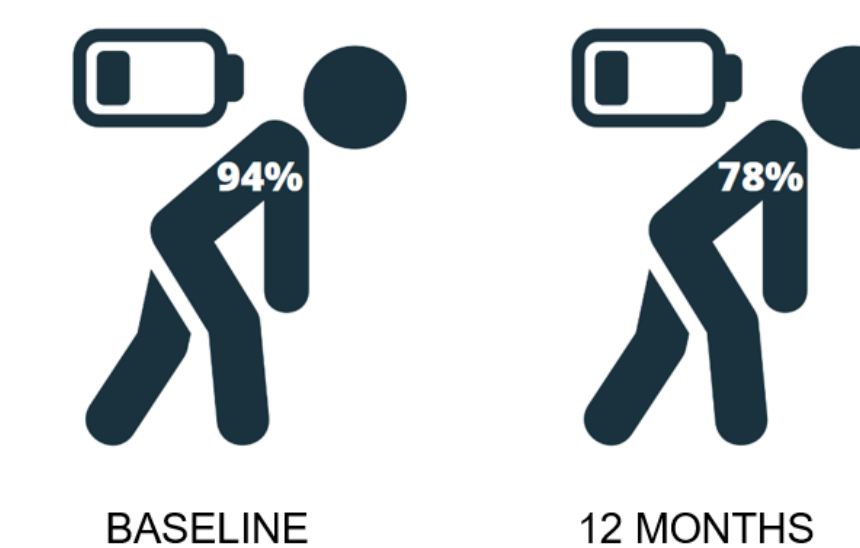
Most patients (76%) had experienced **mild to moderate severity of symptoms**; 24% of patients had been hospitalised for COVID-19.

Significant and clinically relevant improvements over time in all outcome measures between baseline and 12-months. But persistent complaints **remained prevalent**.

Patients **primarily recovered** within the **first 3 months** after start of allied health treatment;

Progress of recovery **diminished substantially** between 3 and 6 months;

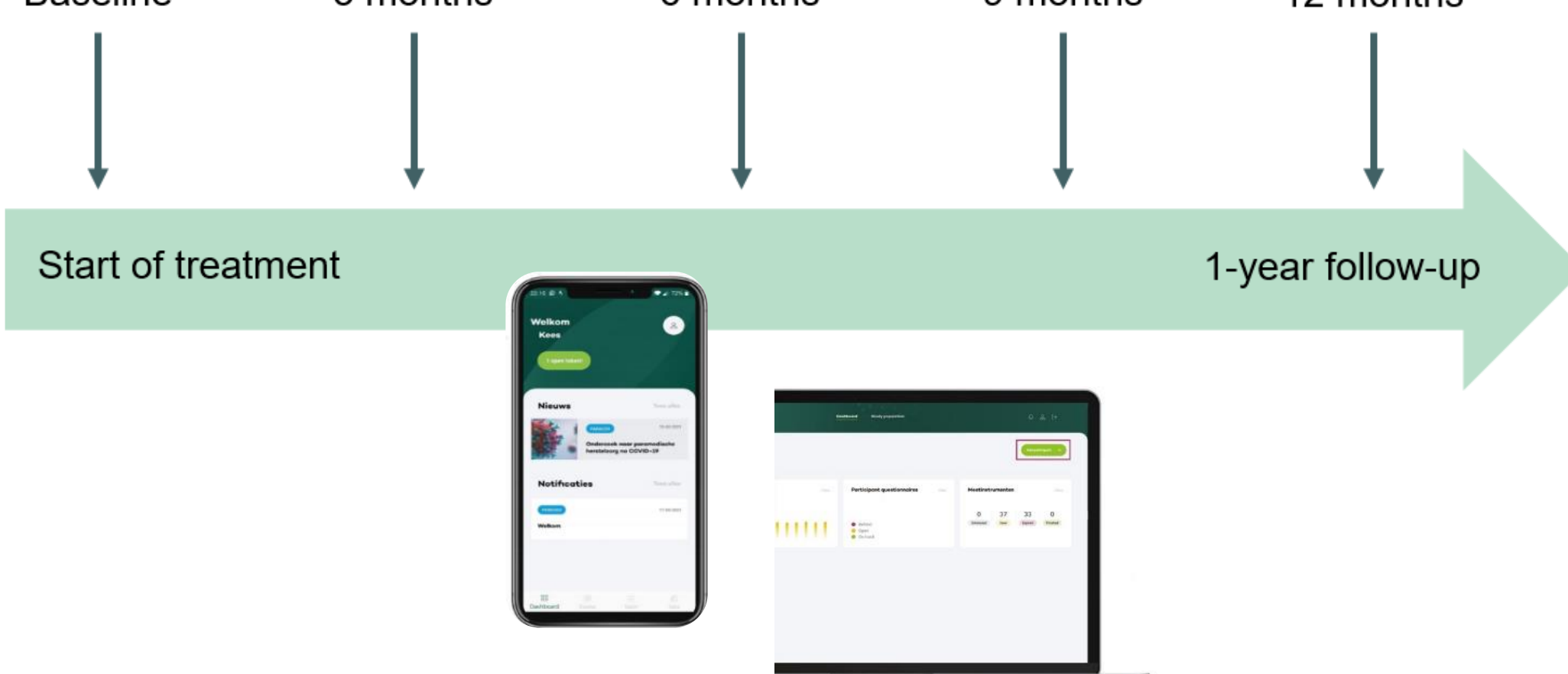
Little to no improvement between 6 and 12 months.



Total allied healthcare costs (mean €1,921; SEM €48) made up **about 3% of the total societal costs** (mean € 64,584; SEM 3,149) for the average patient

METHODS

Baseline 3 months 6 months 9 months 12 months



Outcome measures

- PARTICIPATION
- QUALITY OF LIFE
- FATIGUE
- COSTS
- PHYSICAL FUNCTIONING

CONCLUSIONS

Patients recovering from COVID-19 who visited a primary care allied health professional **improved significantly** in their health status over a 12-month follow-up period, with the fastest response within the first 3 months. Despite improvements, **most participants still reported serious impairments** in their daily lives.

