

Valuing the contribution of Exercise Physiologists in Australia: An economic perspective

Chronic disease and injury are placing growing pressures on Australia's health system, with physical inactivity remaining a major modifiable risk factor linked to poorer health, reduced quality of life and rising costs. Against this backdrop, Exercise & Sports Science Australia commissioned an economic analysis to demonstrate the value of Accredited Exercise Physiologists (EPs) in improving outcomes across six priority condition groups.

The report conducts economic analysis to compare outcomes for people who receive EP care with those who do not. It applies cost-benefit methods to estimate the health system, productivity and wellbeing benefits associated with EP delivered interventions.

The analysis shows EP services deliver strong economic and social value, generating substantial net benefits for patients, the health system and the broader economy. Alongside measurable cost savings and productivity gains, the findings point to meaningful improvements in quality of life, reinforcing the case for investment in EP-led care.

These improvements which span beyond quantifiable economic factors are explored further in the case study below.



Pulmonary conditions

Exercise based pulmonary rehabilitation following worsening chronic respiratory disease.

CASE STUDY



David
65 year old male

David, 65-year-old male, referred by for rehabilitation by respiratory specialist due to severe asthma, chronic COPD and emphysema. Experiencing below average strength, balance, quality of life and walking capacity. Rapid desaturating to below 85% with low levels of exertion.

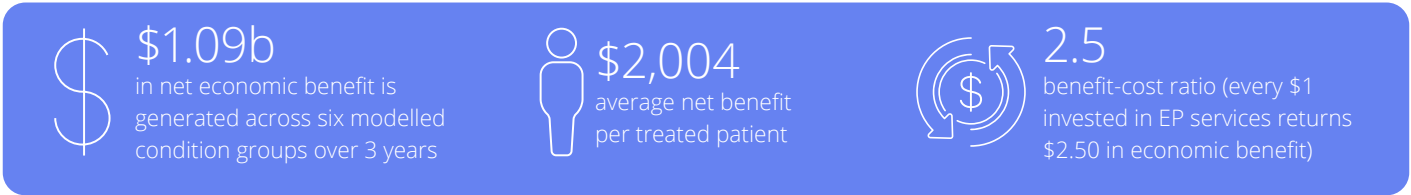
An EP delivered an eight-week pulmonary rehabilitation program as part of a multidisciplinary team. The program combined supervised exercise physiology with education and clinical monitoring, with a focus on improving exercise tolerance, lower-limb strength, balance and confidence participating in daily activity. Exercise intensity was carefully graded in response to symptoms, oxygen desaturation and perceived exertion, with progression guided by functional capacity and tolerance over time.

Following pulmonary rehabilitation, David demonstrated improvement across respiratory, physical and functional measures. Post-program assessment indicated improved lung function, including FEV1, FVC and DLCO, with his respiratory status improving from severe to moderate COPD and emphysema. He also demonstrated improved strength, balance and walking distance, with reduced desaturation during exertion and improved tolerance of functional activity.

Following the formal rehabilitation period, David continued with a home exercise program and attended some supervised group exercise physiology sessions to support ongoing maintenance. He experienced no hospitalisations for more than 12 months following the intervention period.

Deloitte Access Economics & ESSA Project Advisory Group (2026).

The value of Exercise Physiologists



Relieving system capacity

