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

Deloitte Access Economics

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.

Cardiovascular conditions

Preventing progression to cardiovascular disease through early exercise physiology intervention.

CASE STUDY

Joe
58 year old male

Referred by a GP due to cardiometabolic risk factors (pre-diabetes, elevated blood pressure, central obesity & high cholesterol). Experiences recurrent low back pain, fatigue, low confidence exercising. Declining physical activity, family history of myocardial infarction, elevated stress and social withdrawal.

An EP developed an individualised program focussed on reducing cardiovascular risk, improving physical functioning, and supporting sustained behavioural change. This included low-impact aerobic exercise, introductory resistance training, mobility work and strategies to increase daily movement. Joe was encouraged to complete his prescribed exercise program twice per week in a community-based gym environment, while progressively increasing his incidental activity and step count towards 7,000 steps per day.

Joe's progress was reviewed by his EP every 4 weeks across a six-month period, with exercise intensity gradually increased and progression towards greater exercise independence including three gym-based sessions per week. At six months, he demonstrated clinically significant improvement across multiple health and functional domains, including; reduced waist circumference and body weight, improved blood pressure and blood glucose markers, increased aerobic capacity, improvements in muscular endurance, improved energy levels, sleep quality, mental health outcomes, social engagement, and overall wellbeing gains.

Beyond measurable clinical outcomes, Joe described exercise as "something that became part of my routine instead of something I feared".

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

The value of Exercise Physiologists

$1.09b
in net economic benefit is generated across six modelled condition groups over 3 years

$2,004
average net benefit per treated patient

2.5
benefit-cost ratio (every $1 invested in EP services returns $2.50 in economic benefit)

Relieving system capacity

60,355
avoided hospital admissions

38,618
avoided ED presentations

413,009
avoided hospital bed-days

146,748
avoided ED hours

12,599
avoided surgical events