

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.



Physical disability

Maintaining independence and preventing falls in an older adult experiencing functional decline.

CASE STUDY



Pamela

79 year old female

Pamela, 79-year-old female, residing in supported independent living community, referred by Geriatrician due to two falls within a 6-month period. History of osteoporosis, chronic knee pain and declining mobility. Experiencing difficulty managing activities of daily living safely and confidently, resulting in social withdrawal and anxiety.

An EP developed a tailored program for Pamela focussed on falls prevention, improving physical functioning, and supporting her to maintain independence. The program included progressive lower-limb strengthening, dynamic and static balance training, gait retraining and functional movement practice, including sit-to-stand transitions, step work, and safe stair negotiation. The EP explored strategies to safely increase Pamela's daily movement and provided education to support confidence-building and community participation. She initially attended two group exercise physiology sessions per week within her community rehabilitation gym, with close supervision and opportunities for social interaction.

Over eight months, Pamela's EP progressively adapted her program to include more challenging balance tasks, functional strengthening and endurance-based exercise to support safe participation in community and recreational activities. During this time, Pamela demonstrated clinically meaningful improvement across physical, functional and psychosocial domains, including improved strength, balance and walking tolerance, reduced falls risk and osteoarthritic pain, increased confidence participating in community activities, and improved ability to manage activities of daily living.

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