

Allen AK, Body YJ

“What’s That Button Do? Optimizing Pain Control and Strength Gains With Biophysical Agents”

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Medicare and other commercial payers for physical therapy have shifted their reimbursement structure moving from traditional fee-for-service payment to value-based care. In a value-based care reimbursement structure, knowing the value and associated empirical support of interventions utilized has never been more important. One group of interventions that have been questioned regarding their effectiveness and importance during the rehabilitation process is the use of biophysical agents. Unfortunately, barriers exist with the use of biophysical agents in a comprehensive treatment program. Some barriers include limited user confidence with modality settings and poor application within the rehabilitation program. Recent evidence has shown improvements in muscle strength using neuromuscular electrical stimulation in patients with osteoarthritis and within the aging population. As the climate for reimbursement continues to shift towards interventions with empirical evidence to support their effectiveness, it is vital that therapists are equipped with the knowledge and skill to effectively perform desired modalities. The aim of this educational session is to focus on presenting the evidence behind incorporating biophysical agents into a treatment program and reviewing key features and parameters to optimize care and outcomes. Biophysical agents to be included in this presentation are electrical stimulation for pain and strength.