




# Early Exercise Through Telerehabilitation After Bariatric Surgery: Is It Feasible?

Johanna Pino-Zúñiga<sup>1,2</sup> · Mariela Olivares<sup>1,2</sup> · Giselle Muñoz<sup>3</sup> · Camilo Boza<sup>4</sup> · Camilo Duque<sup>1</sup> · Jorge Cancino-López<sup>2</sup> 

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## Abstract

**Purpose** The feasibility of early telerehabilitation after bariatric surgery is unknown. The objective of this study was to assess the feasibility and perception of engaging in the online exercise protocol in patients during the first month after bariatric surgery.

**Material and Methods** A total of 67 patients, enrolled in a telerehabilitation program following bariatric surgery, completed a survey assessing their perception of the intensity, discomfort, and safety during exercise sessions.

**Results** Forty percent of participants began exercising between 5 and 10 days after surgery. Seventy-one percent of patients did not experience discomfort during the first month of exercise, and those who reported discomfort mainly mentioned dizziness and abdominal pain. No significant differences were found in the presence of discomfort among different types of surgeries performed. There was a significant difference in the presence of discomfort between patients who started exercising before and after 15 days of surgery, with less discomfort reported in the group that started after 15 days. Ninety-eight percent of patients felt safe during online exercise sessions. Most participants perceived the intensity of the sessions as moderate. The most frequently mentioned benefits of exercise were increased energy, mood, and feeling more active.

**Conclusion** Telerehabilitation conducted during the first month after bariatric surgery was feasible and well tolerated by patients, providing a safe alternative for those patients who face difficulties with in-person interventions.

**Keywords** Telerehabilitation · Bariatric surgery · Feasibility · Early exercise · Safety

## Key points

1. Forty percent of participants initiated exercise between 5 and 10 days after bariatric surgery.
2. Low prevalence of discomfort during the initial month of post-bariatric surgery exercise.
3. Telerehabilitation is a well-received approach among post-bariatric surgery patients.

✉ Jorge Cancino-López  
jcancino@uft.cl

- <sup>1</sup> Bariatric Center BIO, Santiago, Chile
- <sup>2</sup> Exercise Physiology and Metabolism Laboratory, School of Kinesiology, Faculty of Medicine, Finis Terrae University, Pedro de Valdivia #1509, Providencia, Santiago, Chile
- <sup>3</sup> Nutrition and Bariatric Center, Las Condes Clinic, Santiago, Chile
- <sup>4</sup> MEDS Clinic, Santiago, Chile

## Introduction

Bariatric surgery is a therapeutic option that achieves a significant weight loss [1]. In the initial stage, caloric and protein intake is limited due to the consequences of surgery on the digestive system, resulting in the greatest weight loss during the first year after surgery [2]. During this stage, the intake of solid foods is gradually increased from purees to more solid foods until reaching the necessary recommendations for maintaining a stable weight [3]. Due to the highly restrictive diet, weight loss after bariatric surgery leads to a considerable loss of muscle mass [4]. One therapeutic goal after bariatric surgery is to attenuate the loss of muscle mass through physical exercise [5].

Physical exercise is recognized to stimulate protein synthesis, and current exercise recommendations for these patients consider the performance of strength training combined with aerobic exercises [6]. However, its incorporation in individuals after bariatric surgery has generally been