



Supporting decision-making  
regarding the end of an episode of  
care for adult users undergoing  
physical rehabilitation

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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of the abridged ETMI report

**To support the decision-making process concerning the end of an episode of care for the adult users undergoing physical rehabilitation.**

#### **AUTHORS**

**Pascale Piedboeuf**, Professionnal, Assessment of technologies and methods of intervention in health and social services Unit (Unité d'évaluation des technologies et des modes d'intervention en santé et services sociaux – UETMISSS), Direction de l'enseignement et des affaires universitaires (DEAU), Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux (CIUSSS) de la Capitale-Nationale

**Natasha Dugal**, Professionnal, UETMISSS, Direction de l'enseignement universitaire et de la recherche (DEUR), CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

**Sylvie St-Jacques**, Scientific responsible, UETMISSS, DEAU, CIUSSS de la Capitale-Nationale

#### **APPLICANT**

**Raphaëlle Bédard-Marcotte**, Head of Programme déficience auditive adultes/aînés, surdicécité et Programme d'évaluation et d'entraînement en conduite auto (PEECA), Direction des programmes Déficience intellectuelle et trouble du spectre de l'autisme, et Déficience physique (DDITSADP), CIUSSS de la Capitale-Nationale

#### **MANDATE MANAGERS**

**Isabelle Beaumier**, Head of ETMISSS and Library, DEAU, CIUSSS de la Capitale-Nationale

**Catherine Safiany**, Head of ETMISSS and Libraries, DEUR, CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

#### **LITERATURE SEARCH**

**Marie-Marthe Gagnon**, Librarian, DEAU, CIUSSS de la Capitale-Nationale

**Fanny Tremblay-Racine**, Librarian, DEUR, CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (revision)

#### **GRAPHIC DESIGN**

**Karine Binette**, Graphics arts technician, Service du transfert des connaissances et du rayonnement, DEAU, CIUSSS de la Capitale-Nationale

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## ISSUE

The moment chosen to end a physical rehabilitation episode of care involves several actors, including the user, the team responsible for their care, and the healthcare system in which they operate. On one hand, for the professionals involved, it is often a complex process of negotiation with the user, involving energy and various emotions (Hersh, 2010). For some, this can lead to a conflict of values. A quick or premature end to an intervention, arising from financial or organizational concerns, can result in a sense of failure to meet the user's needs and fully fulfill one's role as a healthcare professional (Hersh, 2010; Togher, 2010). On the other hand, for the healthcare system, the number of service hours has a direct impact on costs (Saxena *et al.*, 2006). Additionally, the duration of episodes of care can negatively affect users on waiting lists if they prove too long (Collins *et al.*, 2010).

## CONTEXT

As part of an improvement initiative targeting the performance of professionals in direct intervention, the management of the Adult and Elderly Auditory Rehabilitation and Deafblindness Programs at the CIUSSS de la Capitale-Nationale highlighted significant variability in the duration of episodes of care, both between professionals and across different clinical profiles. In this context, it mandated the UETMISSS of the CIUSSS de la Capitale-Nationale to conduct an abridged ETMI focusing on the factors that may influence the decision to end a physical rehabilitation episode of care for an adult clientele. Conducted in collaboration with the UETMISSS of the CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal, this evaluation targeted motor, sensory (auditory, visual), and language impairments.

## OBJECTIVE

This abridged ETMISSS aims to answer the following question: "How can decision-making regarding the end of an episode of care for adults undergoing physical rehabilitation be supported?"

The following evaluation questions guided the completion of the mandate:

1. What are the factors or criteria to consider when deciding to end an episode of care?
2. What are the facilitators and obstacles to the decision-making process of ending an episode of care?
3. What tools can support and assist professionals in decision-making regarding the end of an episode of care?

**For further information, see the report at:**

[https://www.ciusss-capitalenationale.gouv.qc.ca/sites/d8/files/docs/MissionUniversitaire/ETMISSS/Rapport-ETMISS\\_Soutenir-pri-de-decision-cloture-clientele-adulte-readaptation-physique.pdf](https://www.ciusss-capitalenationale.gouv.qc.ca/sites/d8/files/docs/MissionUniversitaire/ETMISSS/Rapport-ETMISS_Soutenir-pri-de-decision-cloture-clientele-adulte-readaptation-physique.pdf)

## METHODOLOGY

A literature review using a systematic method was conducted. The bibliographic databases CINAHL (EBSCO), Embase (Ovid), and Medline (Ovid) were queried, and a search in the grey literature was also carried out. The literature search for this ETMI covers the period from January 2012 to January 2023. Two professionals divided the tasks after ensuring a shared understanding of the selection and quality assessment criteria. Data extracted using a structured grid were synthesized and then analyzed according to the evaluation questions.

Experiential data were collected via semi-structured interviews. These data were compared with the literature data through triangulation.

## RESULTS

The literature search identified 7,203 documents from which 24 publications were selected, including 20 primary studies and four documents from the grey literature. The data from these documents, along with the experiential data obtained from four professionals and managers from three institutions, were triangulated. The analysis of all the data allowed for the formulation of findings on the factors, facilitators, and obstacles to consider when deciding to end a physical rehabilitation episode of care, as well as the tools that can support and assist professionals in this decision-making process.

## FINDINGS

The following findings were formulated based on the evaluation of the level of evidence and the convergence of data from the literature and experiential data.

### Factors or criteria to consider when deciding to end an episode of care

- › According to a high level of evidence and experiential data, the user's involvement in the decision to end the episode of care is a criterion to consider.
- › Without reaching the necessary convergence to achieve a level of evidence, other factors were highlighted in the scientific literature and experiential data, including: the social environment and post-discharge destination, the user's ability in activities of daily living (ADL), their safety, the achievement of a therapeutic plateau, and the chronicity of the user's condition.
- › The use of intervention termination criteria should also be considered according to experiential data, though this criterion was not echoed in the literature.

### Facilitators and obstacles to the decision-making process of ending an episode of care

- › According to a high level of evidence and mentioned in experiential data, support from an interprofessional team facilitates the decision-making process.
- › According to a high level of evidence and experiential data, caseload pressure, conflicting opinions between colleagues, lack of resources, and discussions with the user or their family members represent obstacles to ending an episode of care.
- › According to a high level of evidence, waiting for an evaluation by a specialist and legal issues delay the ending of an episode of care.
- › The difficulty in allowing the user to be involved in the decision was identified as an obstacle according to experiential data, although it has less resonance in the literature.

### Tools to support and assist professionals in decision-making regarding the ending of an episode of care

- › Standardized instruments or algorithms specific to different clienteles and conditions were reported, each in a single document in the literature.
- › In-house instruments specific to the disciplines of the participants involved were mentioned in the experiential data.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this abridged ETMI will help support decision-making regarding the ending of a physical rehabilitation episode of care for adults. The analysis of the results and the evaluation of the level of scientific evidence were complicated by the wide range of conditions encountered in physical rehabilitation, and the small number of participants limited the scope of the experiential data. An ETMI or a research project focusing on the applicability of the results in the Quebec context could be interesting avenues to complement the current findings.

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