



CONSUMER OPINION RESEARCH ON THE PHYSICAL THERAPY AND REHABILITATION SERVICE OFFERED AT HOME

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ABSTRACT

The study, conducted from 2022 to 2024, aims to gather users' opinions on the availability of new opportunities for physical therapy and rehabilitation at home in Vienna, the capital of Austria. The target group for our service comprises individuals aged 15 to 80 residing in Vienna. This study examines users' attitudes, both past and present, towards physical therapy and rehabilitation, as well as their desires and opportunities to benefit from the latest mobile home services offered. A survey was carried out to identify the needs of the study. The questionnaire was provided electronically in three languages (Bulgarian, English, and German) and consisted of 10 questions. Thirty-two users from the target group participated in the survey, composed of 16 who had previously used the service and 16 who had not. In analysing the study's results, an alternative approach was employed, utilising the relative shares (in percentages) of the preferred responses from the two groups under examination. The pilot study facilitated a detailed characterisation of the future users of our service in terms of gender, age, educational qualifications, types of health issues, preferences for procedures, concerns about allowing strangers into their homes, and perceptions of service quality and accurate price determination.

Keywords: management, pilot study, survey, rehabilitation

INTRODUCTION

The transition from centralised to market-based economic systems, along with changes in the legal and regulatory frameworks of individual countries, has led to the emergence of various private entities focusing their efforts on professional sports and sports services. According to Tsolov, during this period, the development and provision of diverse sports services began, including educational, sports, entertainment, healing, rehabilitation, prophylactic, and auxiliary services, among others (1).

According to Terzieva, one of the primary forms of adapted physical activity is adapted recreation (2). Its purpose is to activate and maintain physical strength, restore lost strength, prevent fatigue, provide entertainment, and offer enjoyable leisure activities while enhancing fitness and vitality levels (3).

A significant number of authors have concentrated on the functions of adapted physical rehabilitation (4-6). According to contemporary perspectives, it is an ongoing, socially adaptive, resocialising, and institutionally coordinating process (7).

We find the study by Popov exciting, where the author defines the term 'physical rehabilitation' as a vital aspect of the medical, social, and professional facets of healthcare (6). He states that it involves a system of activities designed to restore or compensate for physical and intellectual abilities, to enhance an individual's functional state and improve physical qualities, psycho-emotional stability, and the body's adaptive reserves through various means such as physical culture, sports elements, training, massages, physiotherapy, and natural factors.

Dasheva, Djobova et al. also focus their scientific research on adapted physical rehabilitation. The authors assert that it is an essential part of the overall recovery process for individuals, aiming to emphasise and develop existing skills, including motor skills, rather than merely restoring or compensating for lost or temporarily impaired bodily functions (8).

An essential factor in achieving market goals for sports services, including rehabilitation, is strict adherence to consumer requirements, preferences, interests, and desires.

For this activity to succeed, it is crucial to conduct frequent and thorough market research

into the factors that influence the sale of services. This will aid in the collection, systematisation, and analysis of a substantial amount of valuable information (9).

In this context, gathering information about the characteristics of users of sports services (including the physical therapy and rehabilitation that concerns us), about their gender, social status, marital status, financial capabilities, and specialised needs generally enables the creation of a detailed description of the potential users of the service we offer.

PURPOSE

The marketing research we conducted allowed us to evaluate the marketing landscape, as analysis shows that in Vienna, several physiotherapy centres currently offer the "Home Visit" service; however, none of them consider this their primary focus.

Therefore, this study aims to explore consumers' opinions on the availability of new opportunities for home-based physical therapy and rehabilitation in Vienna, the capital of Austria.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was carried out from 2022 to 2024. Our target group includes individuals living in the Austrian capital, aged 15 to 80 years. The

study explores consumers' attitudes (including those who have used new services) towards physical therapy and rehabilitation, as well as their desires and opportunities to utilise the new mobile service offered at home. To fulfil the study's aims, a survey was conducted. The attached questionnaire, created in electronic format and available in three languages (Bulgarian, English, and German), comprises a total of 10 questions. A total of 32 users from the surveyed target group participated, comprising 16 who had previously used the service and 16 who were new users. In analysing the survey results, an alternative approach was employed to determine the relative percentages of preferred answers from the two studied groups.

RESULTS

The pilot study we conducted enabled us to provide a comprehensive description of the future users of the service we offer. We considered factors such as gender, age, educational qualifications, the nature of health issues, preferred types of procedures, concerns and anxieties about allowing strangers into their homes, as well as the quality of the service and the appropriate determination of its price. **Figure 1** presents information regarding the gender of the participants in our study.

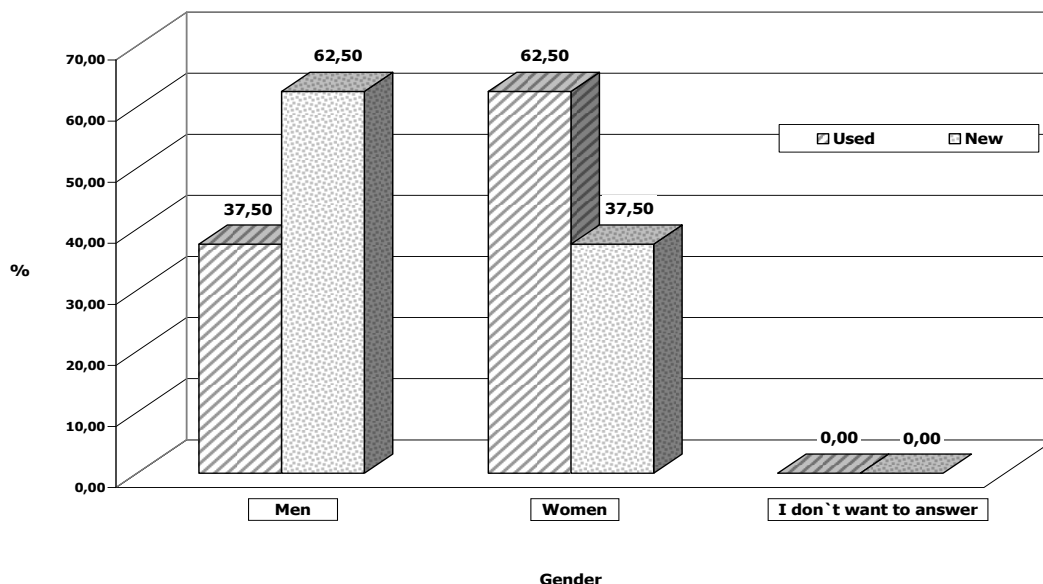


Figure 1. Relative shares of the distribution of surveyed users by gender.

As shown in the figure, 62.5% of individuals who have previously used this service are women, while the remaining 37.5% are men. Notably, the results favour men among those

intending to join. The survey on consumer age indicates that the highest proportions are among those in the oldest age group, over 65 years old (**Figure 2**).

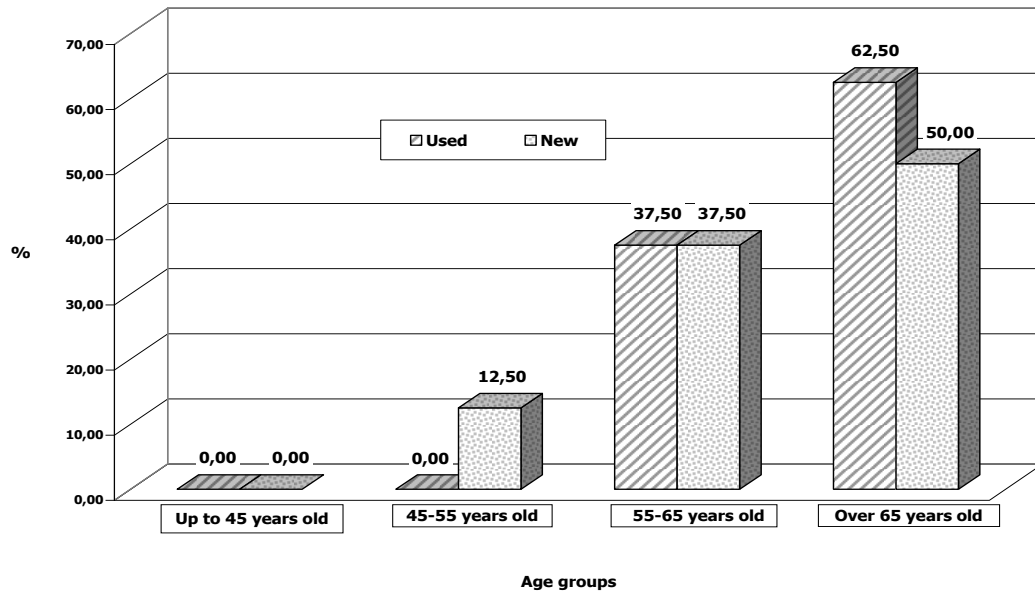


Figure 2. Distribution of respondents by age group

This is quite natural, considering people's tendency to seek such services only when they face serious health issues. However, it is notable that the age of new respondents has decreased, with 12.5% of them falling within the 45-55 age group.

Regarding educational qualifications (Figure 3), it is clear that the service is mainly preferred by individuals with higher education—a trend that extends to new users, reaching 100%.

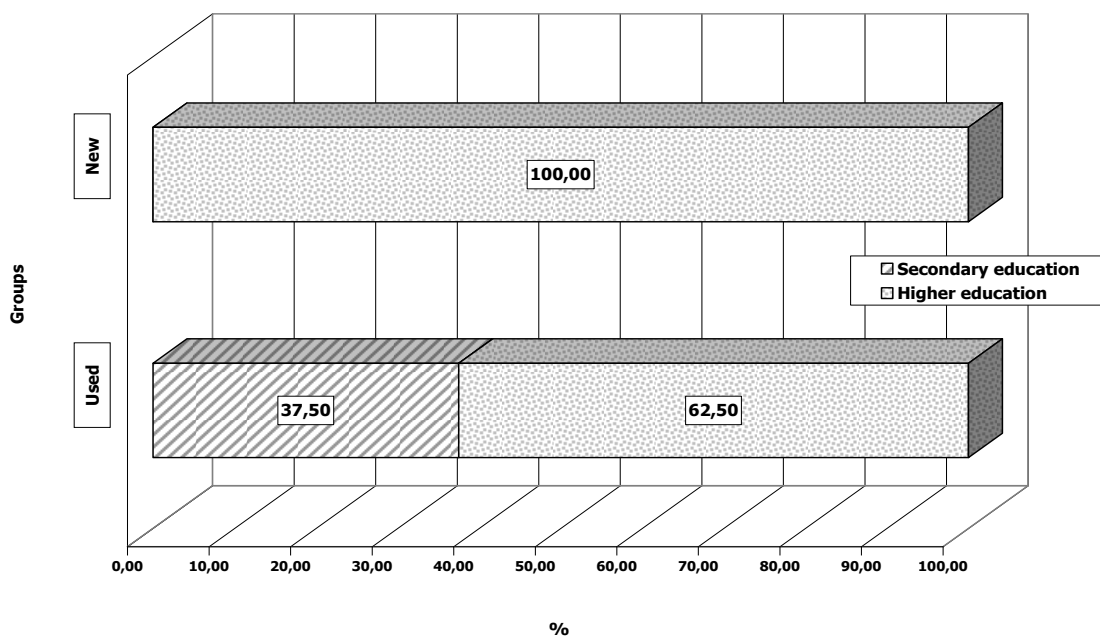


Figure 3. Distribution of respondents by educational qualifications

However, more than a third (37.5%) of those who have already utilised the service possess a secondary education. While we do not wish to be overly categorical, we assume that this may be linked to the reduction of the age requirement for participation. This higher qualification

likely encourages respondents to recognise that such services should be used preventively rather than when they become necessary. A crucial aspect of developing our model is establishing the frequency of undertaking the desired procedures (Figure 4).

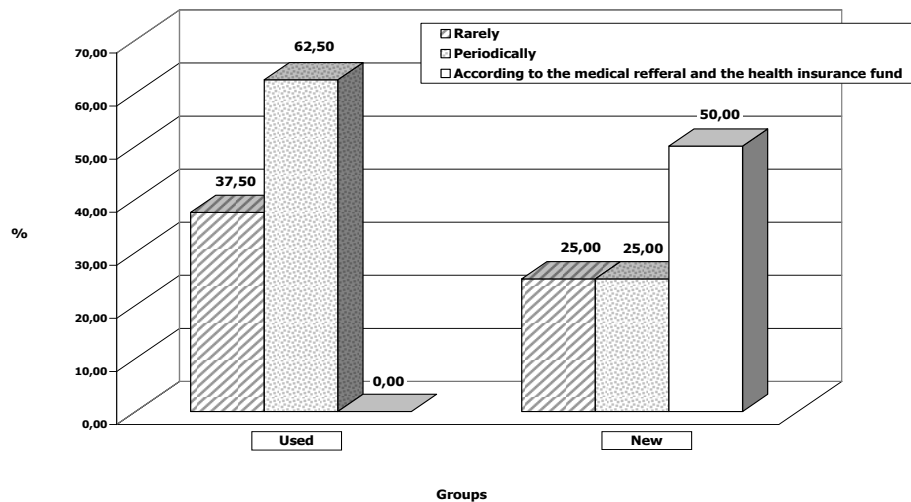


Figure 4. Distribution of respondents by the frequency of service usage.

The analysis reveals that respondents who are already familiar with the procedures we offer primarily utilise them periodically for recovery, relaxation, and pleasure, without the need for a specific medical referral from their attending physician. In contrast, half of the "new" users

state that they intend to seek our service mainly on the recommendation of a doctor.

The study examining the nature of diseases in users indicates that the highest percentage (87.5%) experienced issues with the musculoskeletal system (**Figure 5**).

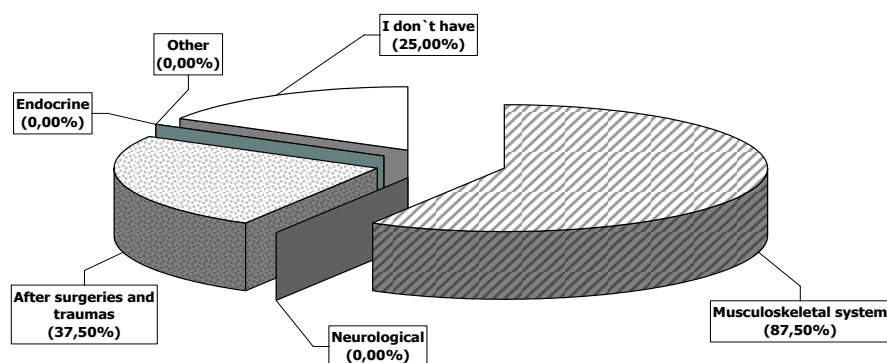


Figure 5. Nature of the diseases for which respondents used the service.

A quarter of all users have sought the service without a medical prescription, and 37.5% have done so following surgeries and traumas. As we also provide treatment for individuals with neurological, endocrine, or other health issues, these conditions are included in the questionnaire. However, as shown in Figure 5, there are no respondents with such problems among those who have already used the service. Half of the "new" users (**Figure 6**) also intend to seek mobile physiotherapy primarily for musculoskeletal issues. Positively, 62.5% of "already users" have utilised the service "preventively" (**Figure 7**), while only a quarter

of new users intend to do so. Although it seems illogical, in both populations, the relative share of those wishing to receive care at home, "due to reduced mobility", is the lowest (**Figure 8**). Notably, "due to the personal attitude of the therapist" is a motive that, in both groups, has the highest influence on the decision to use physical therapy and rehabilitation at home.

One of the key tasks of our research is to identify the primary concerns and anxieties that individuals encounter when selecting such services.

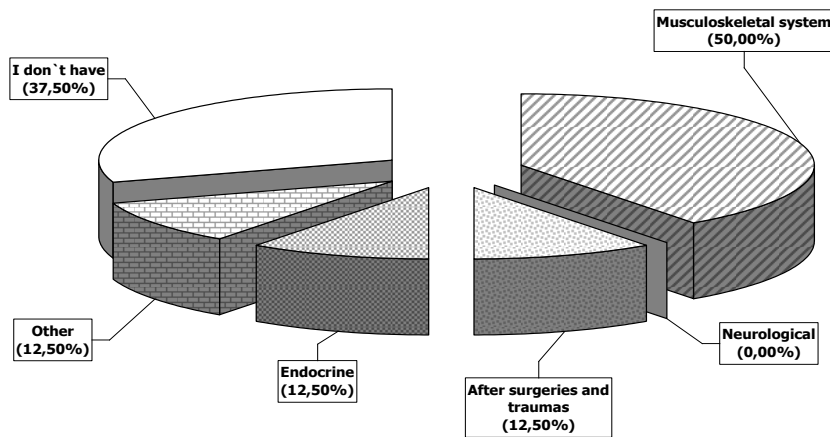


Figure 6. The nature of the diseases that respondents wish to use our service for in the future

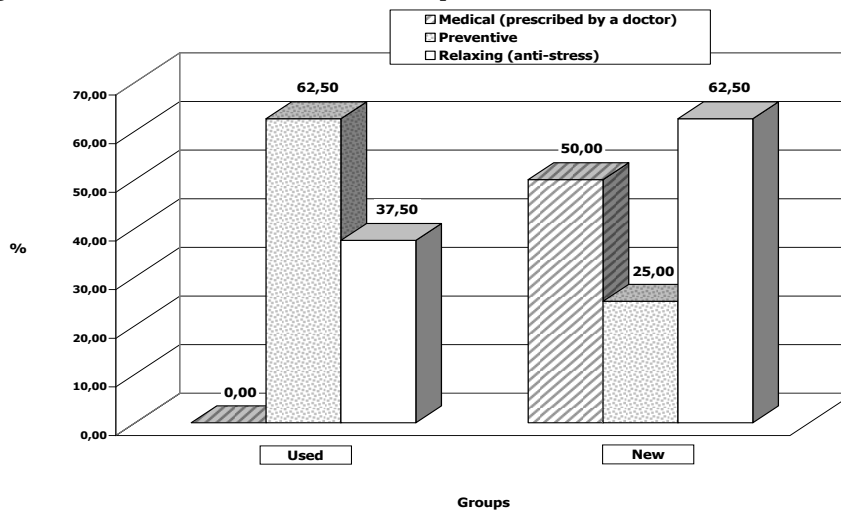


Figure 7. Types of therapies employed

Although it seems illogical, the proportion of those wishing to receive care at home, "due to reduced mobility," is the lowest in both populations (**Figure 8**). It is noteworthy that "due to the personal attitude of the therapist" is the most significant motive influencing the decision to

utilise physical therapy and rehabilitation at home in both groups (62.50% each). One of the essential tasks of our research is to identify the primary concerns and fears that individuals encounter when selecting such services.

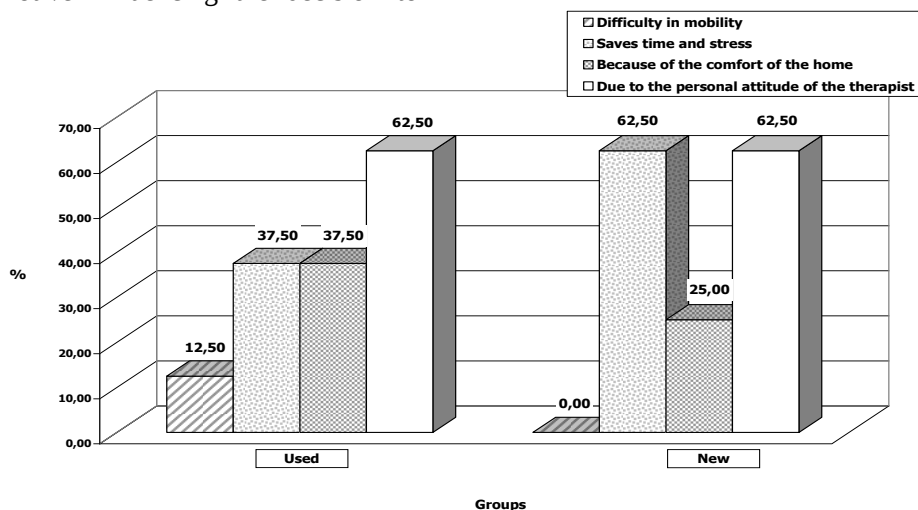


Figure 8. The primary reasons for selecting home-based physical therapy and rehabilitation

The analysis of **Figure 9** reveals that 75% of individuals who have previously used our service express no doubts or concerns regarding their security and the quality of service. However, the expectations of new users differ significantly.

The final question of our survey seeks to determine if the proposed price aligns with respondents' expectations (**Figure 10**).

The analysis reveals that the proportion of individuals who believe the price is appropriately determined and meets their expectations is excessively high. Naturally, new users tend to be more sceptical.

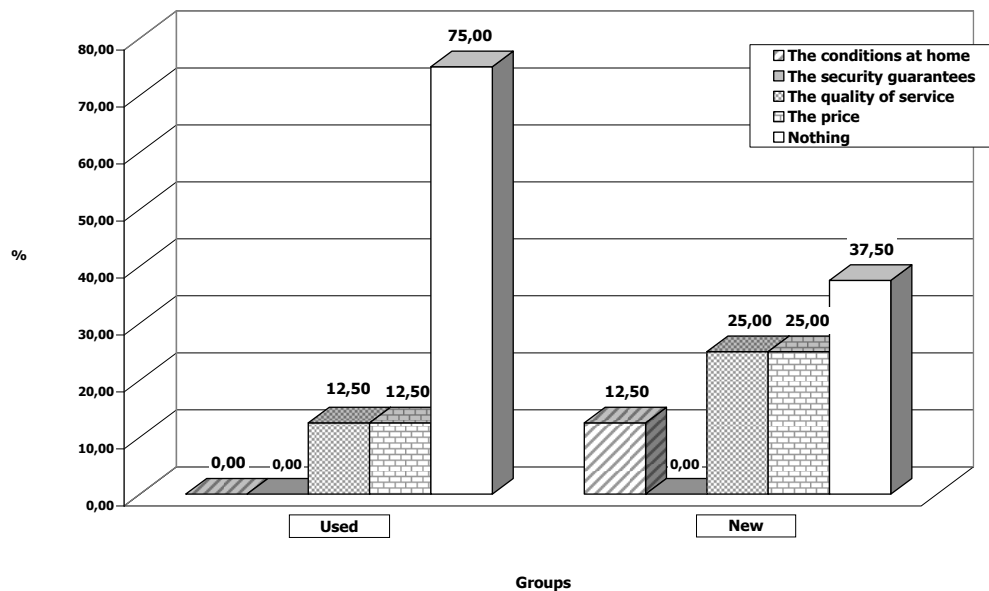


Figure 9. Key concerns when selecting the service provided

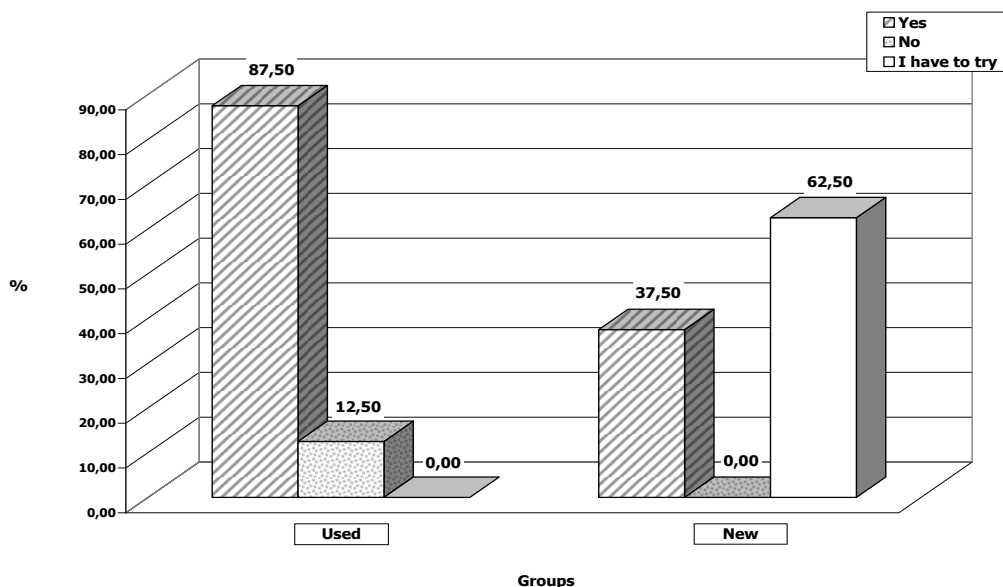


Figure 10. Does the price correspond with respondents' expectations?

The survey of user opinions ("already used" and "new") enabled us to collect a wealth of information, which proved highly beneficial for our team in the final development of our model for physical therapy and home rehabilitation.

DISCUSSION

Most companies that focus exclusively on

consumers assess quality based on the satisfaction those consumers demonstrate. According to the managers, this process begins with the users' needs and is conducted in a way that fully satisfies them (10).

Therefore, we needed to gather information on the needs and desires of the users of our service

(physical therapy and home rehabilitation). A positive aspect is that a significant proportion of those who have already utilised the service report that they have no doubts or concerns regarding their safety and the quality of the service.

According to Zeithaml et al., the issue of service quality involves numerous specialists and manufacturers (11). This is because improving service quality can increase market share, generate additional benefits, enhance productivity, boost customer interest, and maintain competitive pricing relative to rivals. Our research indicates that a significant percentage of respondents who have already utilised the service believe that the pricing is appropriately structured and has met their expectations.

The new digital era is vital for the communication and economic strategies of all organisations, including sports organisations (12). This involves understanding the process, making connections, and implementing it through various forms of mass communication, such as the internet. This understanding led our team to develop a specialised electronic version of the questionnaire, which facilitated primary data collection and more, allowing us to constantly update the opinions of users who either currently use or wish to use our service.

CONCLUSIONS

- The pilot study enabled us to outline the profile of individuals who prioritise our services—specifically, women over 65 with a high level of education.
- Respondents who already understand the procedures we offer have mainly used them occasionally and without a specific medical referral. On a positive note, two-thirds of them have used the service "preventively."
- The highest percentage pertains to the relative share of users who have sought physical therapy and rehabilitation for issues related to the musculoskeletal system. In both populations, the relative share of those wishing to receive care at home "due to difficult mobility" is the lowest.
- The therapist's positive personal attitude is the most decisive influence on the decision to utilise the service offered.
- The proportion of individuals who claim to have no doubts or fears regarding their

security and quality of service is notably high. Nevertheless, women tend to feel more apprehensive about the possibility of someone entering their home, even if it is solely to provide essential care.

- A significant percentage of those who have already used the service believe that the price is set appropriately and meets their expectations. In contrast, newcomers tend to be more sceptical about this issue.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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