

## BACKGROUND

Back pain is a frequent complaint addressed at the Hombro a Hombro clinic in rural Honduras where the predominant occupations are subsistence farming and labor-intensive housework. The current treatment standard is a set quantity of mild analgesic medication. Some also self-treat with over-the-counter steroids. Under the COPC model, the local physician, Dr. Castillo, and the Health Committee identified back pain as an issue to address.

## OBJECTIVE

Introduce self-directed physical therapy as a treatment option for back pain in the patients of the Hombro a Hombro clinic.

## METHODS

- ❖ All willing patients who presented with back pain were taught physical therapy exercises and given therapy sheets.
- ❖ Patient's age, type of back pain (full, upper, or lower), and medication (if given) were recorded.
- ❖ Patients who listed phone numbers were contacted for a follow up survey.



## RESULTS

- ❖ From February-September 2023, 45 patients agreed to try self-directed physical therapy exercises. Most patients also received medication (ibuprofen, paracetamol, Flexeril, meloxicam).
- ❖ Three of the seven people who left telephone numbers agreed to a follow-up survey. They reported home exercises were completed 4-5 times a week and that an in-person demonstration by Dr. Castillo was helpful.
- ❖ Surveyed and anecdotal accounts report improvement in symptoms, and patients have recommended the exercises to others.

## DISCUSSION

- ❖ Preliminary feedback shows patients' willingness to utilize self-directed physical therapy.
- ❖ Treatment effectively responded to a community concern identified through the COPC model.
- ❖ Benefits include improvement in symptoms and a sustainable alternative treatment to medication.
- ❖ Identified challenges include limited provider time to demonstrate and teach the physical therapy exercises, patient literacy levels, patient adherence, and patient ability to do exercises correctly at home.

## CONCLUSION

- ❖ Physical therapy is a treatment option for back pain in rural Honduras.
- ❖ Effectiveness is evidenced by plans by the clinician to extend treatment to other joints (shoulders and knees).
- ❖ COPC model was used effectively and demonstrated local uptake of a newly-introduced care modality.

