

Using exercise to beat injury

BY ELAINE O'REGAN

HealthClinicPlus, a software start-up based in Kerry, has developed a web and mobile therapy platform to help people to recover from musculoskeletal injuries.

Based in Tralee's Tom Crean Enterprise Centre, the company sells to chartered physiotherapists and health professionals, who can then prescribe home exercises for their patients.

"We have a library of thousands of high-quality videos that teach patients how to do their exercises. The software has a mechanism for setting goals for the patients that are specific to their individual injuries or pain conditions," said Aoife Ní Mhuirí, founder and chief executive of HealthClinicPlus.

"It can track patients and gather information on how they are adhering to their exercise programmes, and it can also gather patient-recorded outcome measures that can feed back to the physiotherapist or the doctor about how they are progressing with their exercises - whether they are finding it easy or difficult or whether their pain is improving, along with specific functional goals."

A chartered physiotherapist, Ní Mhuirí worked with the Kerry Senior Football Team for close to ten years before establishing HealthClinicPlus in 2011.

The company employs four people and is supported by Kerry County Enterprise, which has provided €30,000 in funding. It recently secured a €15,000 Feasibility Study Grant from Enterprise Ireland.

"I was lucky enough to be accepted on to the Endeavour Accelerator Programme run by Kerry Technology Park and the Institute of Technology, Tralee, and through that, I got a lot of help from Jerry Kennelly, founder of Tweak.com.

"He was hugely important in the video production process - he ensured that we had really high-quality stock videos. Video production is very important and the videos would have a great look and feel.

"It was through the Endeavour Programme that we met our [software] developer," said Ní Mhuirí.

HEALTHCLINICPLUS.COM

What it does: e-physio software

Why it works: "We have a library of thousands of high-quality videos that teach patients how to do their exercises. The software has a mechanism for setting goals for the patients that are specific to their individual injuries or pain conditions."
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HealthClinicPlus sells to physiotherapists and Ní Mhuirí estimates the company has 100 practices signed up to the service in Ireland and Britain, where clients include the English Institute of Sport and Bupa.

"We have a number of inter-county football and hurling teams using it in Ireland, including the Kerry football team and the Clare senior hurling team," she said.

"When we started the company, we initially went in to the sports area, but before long, we realised that model was relevant right across the board from sports players through to people recovering from hip replacement operations, and people with long-term conditions, like back pain, chronic kidney disease, or diabetes."

In October, HealthClinicPlus was named the winner of the Hothouse Innovation Pitching Event held at the European Telemedicine Conference in Edinburgh.

The company recently secured a Highly Commended Award in the InterTradeIreland Seedcorn Investor Readiness Competition for the second year running, and was also a participant in the inaugural European HealthBox accelerator programme, which took place last year in London.

"We did a BES round with family and friends initially for €52,000 to get us started and we took investment of £50,000 (€60,000) from HealthBox, which was backed by Sandbox Industries in the US," said Ní Mhuirí.

"They have a health-care-focused business accelerator that they brought



Aoife Ní Mhuirí, founder of HealthClinicPlus: 'We are passionate about the power and value of exercise'

to Europe for the first time last year and we were lucky to be one of seven companies on that.

"As well as the investment, they also got a lot of help from them in developing contacts in the British healthcare area."

HealthClinicPlus is increas-

ingly focused on the British market, where Ní Mhuirí is now scoping a trial with an acute hospital trust in the London area. In Ireland, the company has signed a partnership agreement with the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists.

"We are passionate about the power and value of exercise in helping people to receive from injury and improve painful conditions," said Ní Mhuirí.

"We know, as physios, that exercise will always help get a patient better faster if they can

do their exercise programmes at home, but research shows that up to 70 per cent of patients don't do their exercises, so the idea is to try to engage our patients with home exercise programmes and support patients in doing their exercises at home."