Society for Vascular Surgery and Cell-Ed Partner to launch pilot of SVS SET: A mobile exercise therapy app that may prevent and delay progression of peripheral artery disease

SVS SET’s remote digital program is the first of its kind offered by a surgical association

The Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS) has announced the launch into pilot testing of its Supervised Exercise Therapy (SET) app – SVS SET. The app is geared to helping patients with peripheral artery disease (PAD) better manage their disease at home through supervised exercise as well as coaching and education. The app is powered by remote learning and telehealth company Cell-Ed and incorporates Apple’s new mobility metrics tools.

It is estimated that 10 million people in the United States have PAD, which restricts blood flow to peripheral arteries in the arms, legs and feet. If left untreated, PAD can result in significant blockages, pain and, possibly, amputation. It is
associated with increased risk for heart attacks, strokes and coronary heart disease.

The gold standard, first-line therapy to prevent surgical interventions and delay the disease’s painful progression is for patients to attend a supervised, in-person exercise and education program, formally known as Supervised Exercise Therapy. SET consists of walking three times per week for up to 60 minutes for at least 12 weeks.

Only 50 percent of physicians refer patients to SET because clinics and health systems often do not include gym-like facilities, largely due to low reimbursement. However, 98 percent of physicians said in a national 2019 study that they would refer patients for the therapy, if the facilities existed.

The SVS SET app will permit physicians to prescribe the therapy and patients to complete it from their homes. The app also provides live health and wellness coaching and education on behavioral risk factors such as smoking, nutrition and exercise via Cell-Ed.
“Clinically validated studies show that patients with peripheral artery disease who complete a supervised exercise therapy program can stave off the disease’s symptoms and progression,” said Dr. Kim Hodgson, immediate past president of SVS. “Yet few patients enroll because the programs are not available or they are a hardship, in terms of time off work, transportation issues and the costs of attending.

“We at the Society of Vascular Society, along with our partner Cell-Ed, see a unique opportunity for the virtual delivery of the program through our new SVS SET app. By removing barriers for patients and radically expanding access, we believe the app can improve the quality of life for millions of PAD patients.”

“Digital health solutions work best when used for a specific clinical intervention and integrated with clinical feedback, which is what SVS SET delivers,” said Dr. Aalami, director of Biodesign for Digital Health and clinical associate professor of surgery at Stanford University. “We have much to learn with this program and are committed to continued improvement at a time when COVID-19 has led to a dramatic increase in patients using telehealth tools such as this.”

Four years ago, frustrated by PAD patients not being able to access supervised exercise therapy, Dr. Aalami began collecting and validating remote activity data in patients with vascular disease in partnership with Apple. Today, Apple’s algorithms, which better assess patients’ exercise effort and ability remotely, sit within SVS SET app.

The app was featured Friday in Apple’s 2020 Worldwide Developers Conference during a “Beyond Counting Steps” presentation as one of the “great examples” of groups exploring Apple’s Mobility Metrics for clinical use. “The Society for Vascular Surgery will use these mobility metrics to monitor patients with peripheral vascular disease as they work through a home exercise program” said Apple’s presenter.

At the same time, Cell-Ed provides the app’s live coaches that patients need for encouragement and support in order to change their behavior, such as weekly walking, as well as the education and information to learn more about the disease and how to best manage it.

About the Society for Vascular Surgery
The Society for Vascular Surgery is the leading not-for-profit, professional medical society on establishing causes and treatments for vascular disease. SVS seeks to advance excellence and innovation in vascular health through education, advocacy, research and public awareness and is composed of 6,300 specialty-trained vascular surgeons and health care professionals dedicated to providing comprehensive care for vascular disease.

About Cell-Ed
Cell-Ed is a mobile-first learning and telehealth company based in Palo Alto, Calif. Our science-based learning is proven to teach essential life and job skills more effectively and in a fraction of time by delivering engaging micro-lessons, coaching, and certificates over messaging and audio on any mobile device, even a basic phone. Cell-Ed has launched its Cell-Med division with enhanced features for the healthcare industry, including certified health coaching and behavior tracking. To learn more, visit www.cell-ed.com.

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