

For immediate release

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Surveys reveal global state of the physical therapy profession

Responses to the latest World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) survey reveal direct access is available in 48 countries and there is no restriction on private practice in 77 countries.

For a number of years WCPT has published data from its member organisations on a range of issues, including professional regulation, practice, education, and the number of employed physical therapists. This data provides a comprehensive and valuable global profile of the profession.

The most recent data is based on surveys completed by 89 WCPT member organisations in mid-2018. The data gives a global snapshot of the physical therapy profession across the world, showing variations in the density of physical therapists in different countries and between WCPT regions. Highlights of the 2018 data include:

- 54% of respondents said there was direct access in their country and people could refer themselves to a physical therapist without a referral
- 86% of respondents said there was no law preventing private practice in their country
- globally, 60% of physical therapists are women, however this varied from countries where it was as high as 80% (17 respondents) to as low as 40% (four respondents).

WCPT Chief Executive Jonathon Kruger said: 'The responses to the surveys from our member organisations continue to provide rich and valuable international comparisons which WCPT and its members can use to influence policy decisions around health, health service delivery, human resource planning, and education.'

The country profile maps allow people to see how the global profession has evolved since 2013. The maps are an interactive resource that can be printed or downloaded, and can be accessed [here](#).

Feedback from WCPT member organisations has been overwhelmingly positive:

'The infographic presentation of the global survey allows us to clearly understand our current status compared to other WCPT member organisations in the region and the whole world. It is a very useful reference for us to decide the next steps of professional development as well as to advocate our needs to the government. It is our honour, as a member organisation, to be a significant and integral part of WCPT.'

Taiwan Physical Therapy Association

Related links

- [WCPT's member organisations](#)
- [Profiling the profession: WCPT's data collection](#)



Press release

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EDITOR'S NOTES

About physical therapy

Physical therapists (also known as physiotherapists) are experts in developing and maintaining people's ability to move and function throughout their lives. With an advanced understanding of how the body moves and what keeps it from moving well, they promote wellness, mobility and independence. They treat and prevent many problems caused by pain, illness, disability and disease, sport and work related injuries, ageing and inactivity.

Physical therapists are educated over several years, giving them a full knowledge of the body's systems and the skills to treat a wide range of problems. This education is usually university-based, at a level that allows physical therapists to practise independently. Continuing education ensures that they keep up to date with the latest advances in research and practice. Many physical therapists are engaged in research themselves.

About WCPT

WCPT is the profession's global body representing over 450,000 physical therapists/physiotherapists from member organisations in 108 countries. More information: www.wcpt.org.