



World Physiotherapy

**GLOBAL
REPORT**

**ANNUAL
MEMBERSHIP
CENSUS**

2022

World Physiotherapy collects data and information from its member organisations.

Since 2017, the data collection has taken place on an annual basis, providing comparisons at a national, regional, and global level. World Physiotherapy and its member organisations use this data to influence policy decisions around health, health service delivery, human resource planning, and education – and to show variations in the density of physiotherapists in different parts of the world and across World Physiotherapy regions.

For the first time, the AMC in 2022 also included questions on:

- health emergency preparedness and response
- perception of the physiotherapy profession

The AMC also expanded the section related to direct access to physiotherapy services, to gather insights on the nuances to accessing these services at a national level.

In this year's annual membership census (AMC), 125 World Physiotherapy member organisations were sent an online survey, which included questions about:

- number of
 - individual members for the World Physiotherapy member organisation
 - practicing physiotherapists
 - entry level and physiotherapy programmes
- professional name used
- leadership roles by gender
- special interest groups
- publications and conferences
- how they communicate with their membership
- professional practice
- telehealth
- direct access and its limitations
- sources of funding
- regulation
- governance



**In
2022**

660,794

physiotherapists were represented
by World Physiotherapy through its member
organisations.

This is a **decrease*** of **26,789** physiotherapists
compared with 2021.

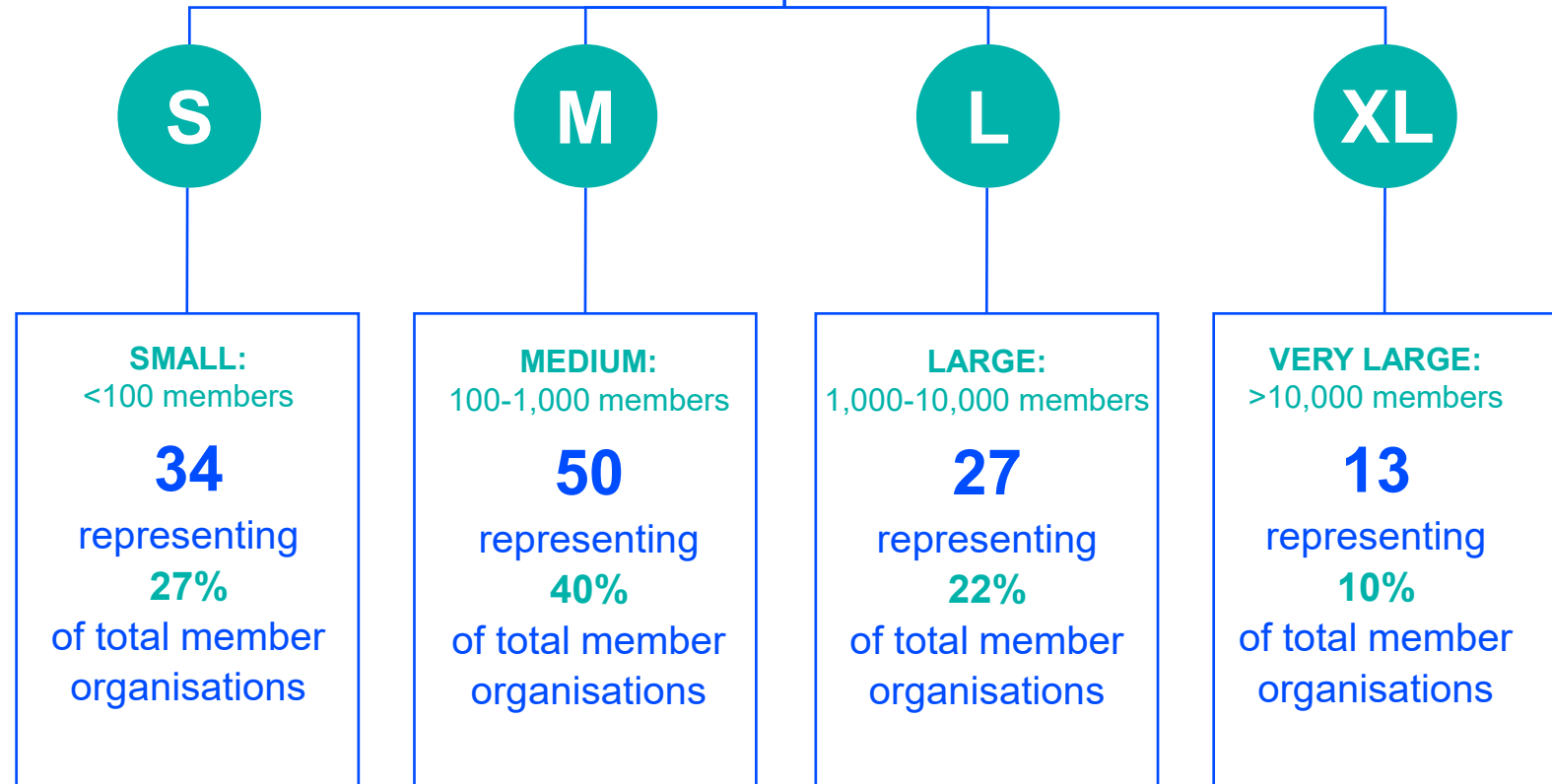
1,917,615

is the **global number of physiotherapists**

34%

of these **physiotherapists** are **members of a
World Physiotherapy member organisation.**

SIZE OF MEMBER ORGANISATIONS



*This decrease is due to an internal audit
of the number of individual members in
the Indian Association of Physiotherapists.
This changed their membership numbers
from 48,397 in 2021 to 14,735 in 2022.

82%

of the **total membership globally** is **represented
by the very large member organisations**

3.6

physiotherapists, on average, for every 10,000 people across the world.

However, this varies widely across World Physiotherapy's five regions:

13.2

Europe

7.4

South America

6.2

North America
Caribbean

1.5

Asia
Western Pacific

0.2

Africa

↑
%63

of member organisations reported an **increase** in the number of their individual members

↔
%12

of member organisations reported **no change** in the number of their individual members

↓
%26

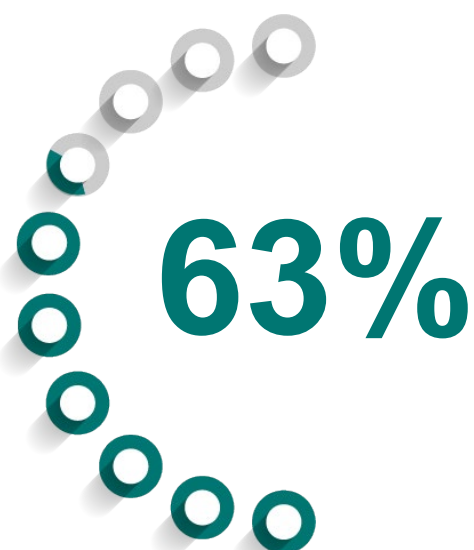
of member organisations reported a **decrease** in the number of their individual members

The **decrease** in global physiotherapist workforce from **4.3 in 2019** to **3.6 in 2022** is due to the increase in the global population.

The number of **individuals** with a health condition that could **benefit from rehabilitation** is estimated at **2.4 billion**.



of the individual **members of World Physiotherapy member organisations** are female



of the **global physiotherapy workforce** are female

However, in relation to the physiotherapy workforce, there are variations between the five regions ranging from **68%** in the **Africa region** to **54%** in the **Asia Western Pacific region**.

Although there are more women than men in the global physiotherapy workforce:



48%

of board members with World Physiotherapy member organisations are female



42%

of World Physiotherapy member organisations globally have female presidents or chairs

14% of member organisations state having specific **policies** or programmes to support **women in leadership** roles.

During the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth adoption increased significantly. While current adoption rates are lower than they were in 2020, they are still higher than pre-pandemic levels.

A number of member organisations have advocated for telehealth services, and for their inclusion within the scope of practice for physiotherapists.



83%

**of AMC respondents
reported physiotherapists
are allowed to provide
services via telehealth**



The continued provision of telehealth services beyond the immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic indicates that telehealth is here to stay. Best practices and research should continue to support safe and effective incorporation of telehealth into physiotherapist practice.

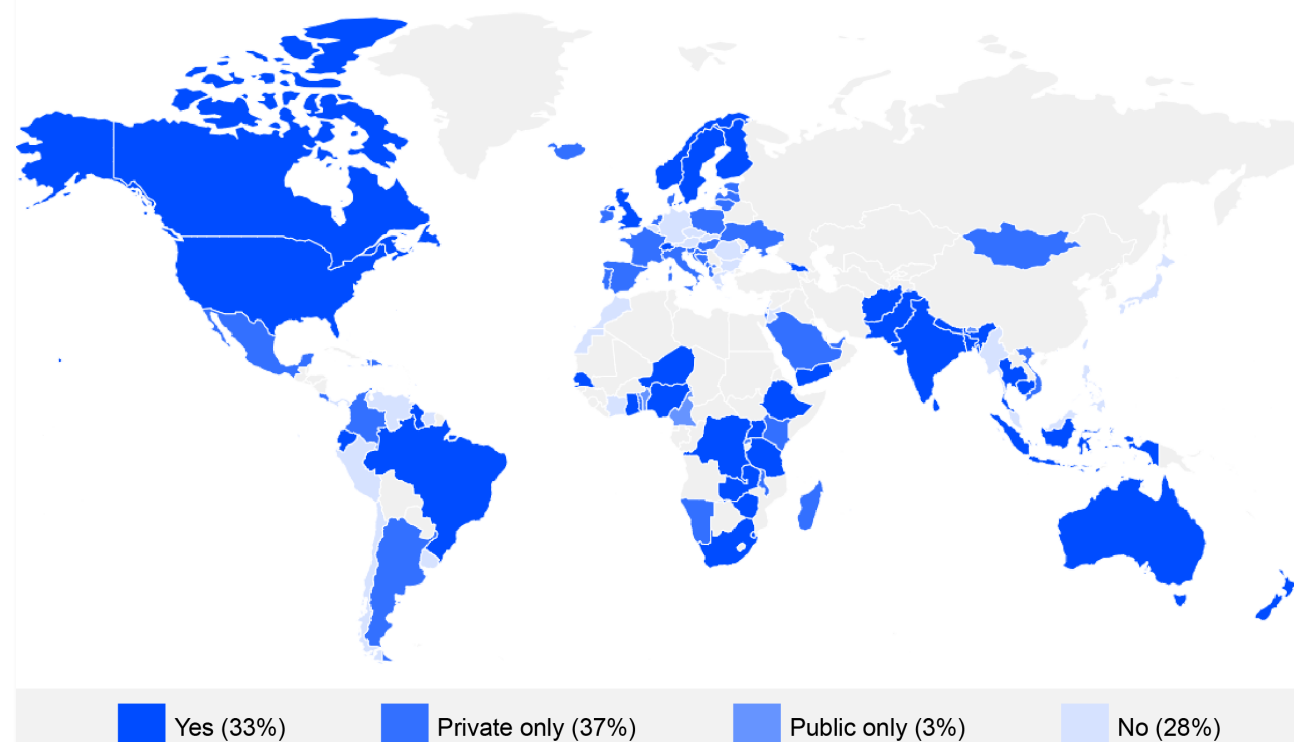
Direct access and patient self-referral are the circumstances where patients/clients can access physiotherapy services without having to see another health provider first. **Direct access is a key advocacy goal** for many World Physiotherapy member organisations who consider this a key pathway to achieving **professional independence and recognition** in a country/territory.

A growing body of evidence suggests that **direct access** to physiotherapy services is **safe and cost-effective for public health systems**, especially in primary care and related to musculoskeletal conditions. Early access to physiotherapy services through direct access can **reduce the likelihood of acute conditions becoming chronic** and leading to disability.

There are different categories in which the type of direct access can be analysed:

- no direct access at all
- direct access only in public health system
- direct access only in private practice
- full direct access

COUNTRIES/TERRITORIES WITH DIRECT ACCESS TO PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES



Direct access remains a **priority advocacy issue** for the global profession. **World Physiotherapy advocates for the right** of those seeking physiotherapy services to self-refer to a physiotherapist if they so desire, and believes that this right **promotes the autonomy** of users of physiotherapy services and enables fair and equitable access to such services.

 **33%** of countries/territories have **full direct access**
(2021: 29%)

 **37%** of countries/territories have direct access **only in private practice**
(2021: 40%)

 **28%** of World Physiotherapy member organisations reported **no direct access**
(2021: 28%)

Since 2019, the number of countries/territories reporting full direct access to physiotherapy services has **increased from 32 to 38.**

While some countries/territories may have a form of direct access in public or private practice settings, **limitations exist around how direct access is implemented.** 52% of AMC respondents reported that direct access is limited to physiotherapist training and competencies; **18%** reported **limitations around the length of time they are permitted to treat** via direct access; and **17%** reported **limitations on the population or health condition** that may be treated in a direct access model.

Physiotherapy in emergency settings is a growing area of practice. The World Health Organization (WHO) highlights the important role that rehabilitation professionals play in emergency medical teams, policy development, and advocacy.

Physiotherapists are integral to meeting rehabilitation needs during emergencies



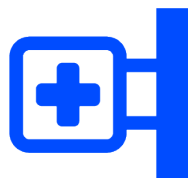
44%

of member organisations reported that physiotherapy was included health emergency preparedness planning and response



15%

reported having a plan for managing a potential surge in physiotherapy needs in the event of an emergency



18%

reported training opportunities for key physiotherapy staff to manage different emergency situations





64%

of respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** other health professionals have a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities of physiotherapists



42%

of respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** the general population has a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities of physiotherapists



30%

of respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** policy makers and other government officials have a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities of physiotherapists



71%

of respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** there has been an increase in the frequency of physiotherapists appearing on/being interviewed in the media

For the first time, the AMC asked questions about the perception of the physiotherapy profession in different countries/territories and how the profession is perceived by different stakeholders involved in the health system in the relevant country/territory.

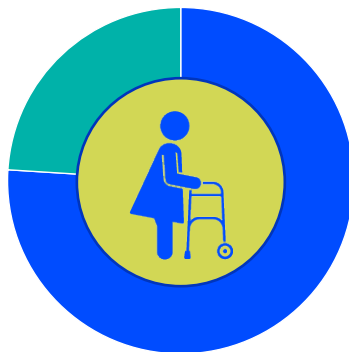


81% of respondents stated their member organisation had **produced campaigns to raise awareness of the physiotherapy profession** in the last year.

This shows the work member organisations are doing to promote the physiotherapy profession in their country/territory. However, there are opportunities to improve the perception of the physiotherapy profession with other stakeholders in the health care system.

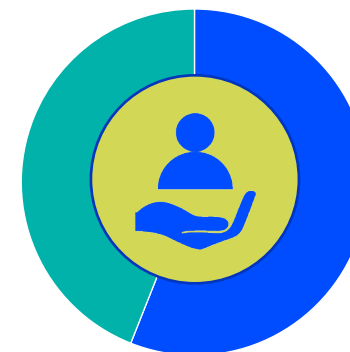
76%

of respondents said **special interest groups** were recognised in their country/territory



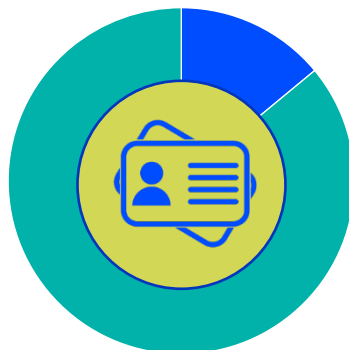
56%

of respondents said **support personnel** worked with physiotherapists in their country/territory



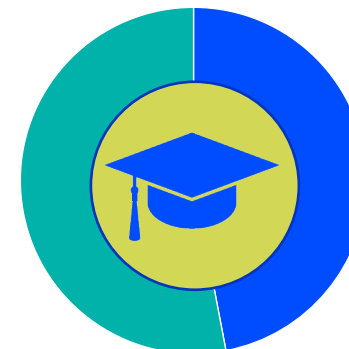
14%

of respondents said being a **member of their national association** is mandatory to practice in their country/territory



47%

of respondents said physiotherapist have access to **PhD programmes** in their country/territory



Africa region		Asia Western Pacific region		Europe region		North America Caribbean region	South America region
Benin	Zambia	Afghanistan	Singapore	Albania	Latvia	Bahamas	Argentina
Cameroon	Zimbabwe	Australia	Sri Lanka	Austria	Lebanon	Barbados	Brazil
Congo (Democratic Republic)		Bangladesh	Taiwan	Belgium	Liechtenstein	Bermuda	Chile
Eswatini		Bhutan	Thailand	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Lithuania	Canada	Colombia
Ethiopia		Cambodia	United Arab Emirates	Bulgaria	Luxembourg	Dominican Republic	Costa Rica
Ghana		Fiji	Vietnam	Croatia	Malta	Guyana	Ecuador
Ivory Coast		Hong Kong	Yemen	Czech Republic	Montenegro	Haiti	Mexico
Kenya		India		Denmark	Netherlands	Jamaica	Peru
Madagascar		Indonesia		Estonia	Norway	Panama	Uruguay
Malawi		Japan		Finland	Palestine	Puerto Rico	Venezuela
Mauritius		Korea (Republic of)		France	Poland	St Lucia	
Morocco		Kuwait		Georgia	Portugal	Suriname	
Namibia		Macau		Germany	Romania	Trinidad and Tobago	
Niger		Malaysia		Greece	Slovakia	United States	
Nigeria		Mongolia		Hungary	Slovenia		
Rwanda		Myanmar		Iceland	Spain		
Senegal		Nepal		Ireland	Sweden		
South Africa		New Zealand		Israel	Switzerland		
Tanzania		Pakistan		Italy	Ukraine		
Togo		Philippines		Jordan	United Kingdom		
Uganda		Saudi Arabia		Kosovo			

The AMC was sent to **125 member organisations**, of which 116 responded, representing a **92.8% response rate**.

This is consistent with previous years' response rates and demonstrates strong engagement between World Physiotherapy and its member organisations.



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DISCLAIMER

- The data in this report is based on responses to the annual membership census (AMC) sent to World Physiotherapy's member organisations.
- The AMC was sent to 125 member organisations, of which 116 responded, representing a 92.8% response rate. This is consistent with previous years' response rates and demonstrates strong engagement between World Physiotherapy and its member organisations. The census date was 30 June 2022.
- Some data in this report has been collated from other sources available to World Physiotherapy.
- If you have any questions or concerns, or want to make changes to your country's data, please contact membershipcensus@world.physio.