

Relationship with other health professionals

Policy statement

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Relationship with other health professionals

Physiotherapists practise in partnership with other health professionals to manage and provide services to patients/clients.

World Physiotherapy expects physiotherapists to have an understanding of the role and function of the other professions, appreciating core differences as well as common features.

It is the responsibility of World Physiotherapy's member organisations, as well as individual physiotherapists, to have strategies in place so that the roles and functions of physiotherapists and the efficacy of physiotherapy services can be demonstrated and marketed to other health professions.

As stated in World Physiotherapy's policy on direct access, World Physiotherapy believes that "physiotherapy professional entry level education prepares physiotherapists to be first contact autonomous practitioners, able to examine/assess, evaluate, diagnose, prognose, intervene/treat, determine outcomes and discharge patients/clients without referral from another health professional (eg medical practitioner) or other third party." (1, 2) Where a medical referral is required to initiate physiotherapy services, the referral should contain essential medical/health information and an indication to examine/assess and intervene/treat. Physiotherapists may also accept referrals from other professionals.

Physiotherapists are qualified to undertake a comprehensive examination/assessment of the patient/client to formulate a diagnosis and plan of care, to implement a therapeutic intervention/treatment programme if appropriate, to evaluate the outcome of any intervention/treatment, and to determine discharge arrangements. (3, 4) In doing so physiotherapists practise with other health professionals to act in the best interests of their patients/clients.

World Physiotherapy encourages its member organisations to raise awareness and educate other professions of the scope of physiotherapist practice in order to enhance inter-professional collaborative practice and to benefit patients/clients.

Physiotherapists should have policies and procedures in place to ensure communication with their patients'/clients' medical practitioners and other relevant professionals. These policies and procedures will facilitate consultation and accurate documentation and reports by physiotherapists to other service delivery providers. (5, 6)

[Glossary \(https://world.physio/resources/glossary\)](https://world.physio/resources/glossary)

Access to physiotherapy

Advanced scope of practice

Diagnosis

Direct access

Documentation

First contact practitioner

Interprofessional collaborative practice

Plan of care

Referral procedures

Scope of practice

Self-referral

Approval, review and related policy information	
Date adopted:	<p>Approved at the 16th General Meeting of WCPT June 2007, replacing two previous declarations of principle on relationships with medical practitioners and relationships with other health professionals, both approved at the 13th General Meeting of WCPT, June 1995.</p> <p>Edited and re-approved at the 17th General Meeting of WCPT, June 2011.</p> <p>Revised and re-approved at the 18th General Meeting of WCPT May 2015.</p> <p>Revised and re-approved at the 20th General Meeting of WCPT May 2023.</p>
Date for review:	2027
Related World Physiotherapy policies:	<p>World Physiotherapy policy statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced physiotherapy practice • Autonomy • Description of physiotherapy • Primary health care • Physiotherapy documentation and records management

References

1. World Physiotherapy. Policy statement: Direct access. London, UK: World Physiotherapy; 2019 [28 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://world.physio/policy/ps-direct-access>.
2. World Physiotherapy. Policy statement: Autonomy. London, UK: World Physiotherapy; 2023 [28 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://world.physio/policy/ps-autonomy>.
3. World Physiotherapy. Physiotherapist education framework. London, UK: World Physiotherapy; 2021 [3 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://world.physio/what-we-do/education>.
4. World Physiotherapy. Policy statement: Description of physiotherapy. London, UK: World Physiotherapy; 2023 [28 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://world.physio/policy/ps-descriptionPT>.
5. World Physiotherapy. Policy statement: Advanced physiotherapy practice. London, UK: World Physiotherapy; 2019 [24 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://world.physio/policy/ps-advanced-pt-practice>.
6. World Physiotherapy. Policy statement: Physiotherapy documentation and records management. London, UK: World Physiotherapy; 2023 [2 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://world.physio/policy/ps-records-management>.

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