



Inventory of Advanced Physiotherapy Practice Models in Switzerland in 2020

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Background

Demographic changes, rising health care expenditures and an anticipated shortage of physicians urgently require successful adaptation of health care provision in Switzerland. Advanced Physiotherapy Practice (APP) models may improve access to cost-efficient care, add to professional career perspectives, and therefore potentially increase job retention of physiotherapists. In Switzerland, first APP models were implemented in the health care system during the last decade. This sub-project of the nation-wide initiative “Competence Network Health Workforce” (CNHW) therefore aimed to describe APP models in Switzerland.

Research Question / Aim

In the current project phase, the following research questions are answered: 1) Which APP roles are currently implemented in in- and outpatient settings of the Swiss health care system? 2) What kind of facilitators for the implementation of APP roles can be identified? 3) Which overarching models can be described for APP in Switzerland?

Method / Procedure

Based on previous project results (a literature review on national and international experiences with APP and qualitative expert interviews), a quantitative questionnaire was developed to assess current job profiles, tasks and responsibilities of physiotherapists with APP functions in Switzerland. A web-based survey in French, German and Italian was then distributed via the professional association physioswiss and other multipliers. Physiotherapists were invited to participate if they themselves felt that they were performing APP tasks. Data were analysed descriptively.

Results

144 physiotherapists responded to the online survey. Among these, 76 (53 %) reported to carry out APP tasks. Preliminary analysis revealed that 43 % of reported APP roles were integrated in outpatient care, 19 % in acute hospital care, 17 % in rehabilitation clinics, 5 % in interprofessional health centres and 16 % in another in- or outpatient setting. The most often reported APP tasks were: “Recommendation of treatment options to the treating physicians”, “Representing the interests of patients (e.g. towards insurance companies, authorities, employers, doctors)”, “Counselling/care for patients’ relatives” (in the outpatient settings) and “Participating and reporting in interdisciplinary special consultations” (in the inpatient settings). Implementation of APP tasks was rated as strongly depending on the following factors: professional experience (92%), specialized training (84%) and generic competences (e.g., communication, capacity for teamwork) (82%).

Discussion

Tasks corresponding to the current definition of APP are represented in the in- and outpatient settings. Based on the results from previous project steps and from this survey, current overarching APP models in



the Swiss health care system will be described thoroughly by the following aspects: settings, tasks and responsibilities of APP roles, the educational background required for APP roles and factors influencing the implementation of APP roles. They will be evaluated by experts in the final project phase.

Conclusion

The concise description of current APP roles and models in Switzerland may facilitate future development and implementation of APP models. Further research is required to investigate whether APP models may contribute to improved cost-efficiency of care and enhanced career perspectives among physiotherapists in Switzerland.