

Development of an aquatic physical therapy network

Waller B¹, Casado D², Lambeck J³

¹Department of Health Sciences, University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland. ²Los Andes University and Meds, Santiago de Chile, Chile. ³Faculty of Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Sciences, University Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

Introduction

The aquatic physical therapy network affiliated to the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) was approved in 2010 with the aim to facilitate communication between aquatic (physical) therapy professionals worldwide. Goals were defined and a website was launched. The aim of this survey was to find common views on the role of the network to help direct its development.

Methods

A short internet based survey consisting of 8 questions (in English and Spanish) was sent by e-mail to current members and member organizations of the aquatic physical therapy network affiliated with the WCPT (www.wcpt.org/apti). In addition the possibility to complete the survey, via the WCPT website, was created for non-members. Data collection was conducted between October and December 2012.

Results

In total 110 replies were received from 69 members and 31 non-members representing 29 different countries (Figure 1). 64% of responders were clinical physical therapists, 10% researchers, 9% in education, 5% Managerial physical therapists, 3% occupational therapist and 9% other.

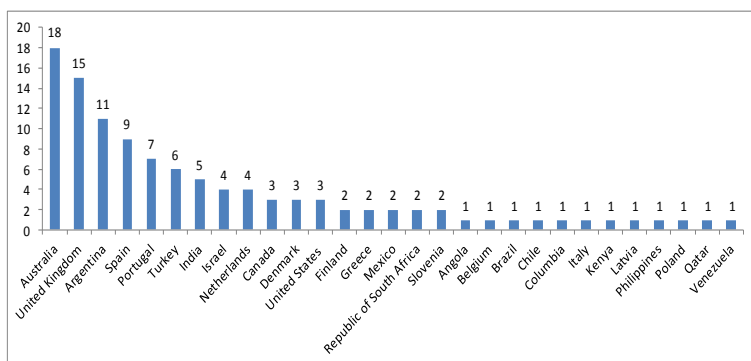


Figure 1 Country of employment

How responders perceive the objectives of the APTI (in order of importance, most important first):

1. Promote evidence based practice and clinical reasoning in aquatic physical therapy
2. Promote and support the development of educational material and professional development
3. Collect information on best clinical practice, safety and hygiene standards
4. Provide a forum to discuss clinical practice and management issues in aquatic physical therapy
5. Promote collaborative research and facilitate communication on research topics and outcomes
6. Liaise and collaborate with other groups of aquatic therapy professionals
7. Support the development of aquatic physical therapy less-resourced countries

In what areas are you willing to share your knowledge?	YES	No
Development of educational materials and continued professional development pathways for aquatic physical therapists	61	49
Development of guidelines for best clinical practice	55	55
Evidence based aquatic therapy practice	61	49
Hygiene and health and safety guidelines	28	82
Collaborate in research and facilitate communication within research areas	56	54
Provision of knowledge to support the development of aquatic physical therapy less-resourced countries	47	63

Table 1 Areas in which responders are willing to share their knowledge

Responders felt the main areas in which they expected the APTI to help them are (In order of importance, most important first):

1. Promote communication in aquatic therapy around the world
2. Guidelines and information on Evidence based practice
3. Guidelines for best clinical practice
4. Research: promote, provide links between researcher, advice on performing research, updates on new research published.
5. Suggestions for structured training at under and post graduate level
6. Information and contacts for specific specialities within aquatic therapy e.g. paediatrics
7. A working and easily accessible forum/discussion page
8. Guidelines on health and safety

Only 31% of responders had accessed the APTI forum and 6 % had been unable to access the forum and 45% had downloaded resources from the APTI webpages.

Conclusion

There is a clear role for the APTI network in the development of aquatic therapy with a need to improve and facilitate communication and sharing of information with particular focus on evidence based and best clinical practice as well as research. The current forum appears inadequate for this purpose based on feedback from members. New methods need to be discussed and implemented to improve this area.

