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Physiotherapists' Engagement With an Outcomes-Based Approach to Demonstrating Competence Through Continuing Professional Development

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PURPOSE: The activity formed part of a government-funded project involving all 14 of the allied health professions [AHP] in the United Kingdom to test an outcomes-based approach to continuing professional development [CPD] **RELEVANCE:** The project was initiated within the physiotherapy profession, but quickly attracted the interest of other professions and government departments. It particularly resonated with a collective wish to achieve more tangible links between on-going professional learning and maintaining and enhancing professional knowledge and skills to meet patient care and service needs **DESCRIPTION:** A draft outcomes-based approach to demonstrating competence through CPD had been developed for UK physiotherapists in previous work. This was refined in an AHP-wide project, funded by the English Department of Health, and managed by the physiotherapy professional body. Physiotherapists formed the largest group of participants within pilot activity. They used the draft outcomes model as a structure to reflect on, and document, their recent professional development and provided feedback on using the draft materials. Their reflective statements and feedback were analysed to assess the potential value of the model and how it required modification **RESULTS:** Physiotherapy participants' feedback was largely in line with that received from participants from the other 13 professions. Their statements showed promise in using the outcomes model, while highlighting their need for stronger support to engage in genuine reflection. Their feedback also indicated varying views on the nature of professional competence and a related questioning about how far an outcomes-based approach to CPD can enable the demonstration of continued competence **CONCLUSIONS:** The project confirmed UK physiotherapists' commitment to their CPD, while raising questions about how well they articulate the achievements of their learning and the impact and value of learning activity for patient care and service delivery. Further government funding is being sought to explore these issues in more depth and to develop support tools for CPD that is demonstrably responsive to learning needs