

A Comparison of Students Record Keeping With the European Core Standards

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this study was to compare student physiotherapists' record keeping practice with the European Core Standards of Physiotherapy Practice. **RELEVANCE:** To assess the record keeping practice standards of student physiotherapists in order to identify weaknesses that need to be addressed by educators. **SUBJECTS:**The subjects being studied were physiotherapy students .The item being evaluated was the patient chart. The study sample included all included all patient records completed by 3rd and 4th year physiotherapy students in the Out-patient department of a large teaching hospital during the academic year October 8th 2001 to June 28th 2002. **MATERIALS AND METHODS:** The audit tool which accompanies the Core Standards was used to evaluate the students record keeping.The audit tool assesses record keeping under 10 different headings: informed consent, assessment, examination, analysis, treatment planning, implementation, evaluation, transfer of care / discharge, documentation and patient and physiotherapist safety. A sample of charts were analysed to ensure interrater reliability of information retrieval. **ANALYSES:** Results were analysed using descriptive statistics. **RESULTS:** A total of 167 episodes of care from October 2001 to June 2002 met the criteria and were audited. Patient's expectations of physiotherapy intervention and patient's needs were rarely documented. Other poor results were observed in a wide range of areas including informed consent, goals, discharge summary, risk assessment, co-signature and name printing. Criteria which were met in more than 90% of cases included; examination, the use of outcome measures, evaluation, and the writing of concise, legible and logical records. **CONCLUSIONS** Some areas of student record keeping show high compliance with published standards but a number of weaknesses in practice have been identified and brought to the attention of the educators. Re-audit is needed to determine if changes have been implemented, thus completing the audit cycle.