



Senior Physiotherapists' Engagement In Continuing Professional Development

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PURPOSE: The current physiotherapeutic literature reveals little about how senior clinicians learn. The individual attitude of senior physiotherapists to learning is vital as they have a direct effect on service delivery and on the development of more junior staff and students. This small exploratory study investigated the continuing professional development (CPD) activity, particularly in relation to reflective practice, of a group of experienced clinical educators. **RELEVANCE:** Reflective practice is increasingly being considered as an integral part of CPD, however, the literature suggests that without formal systems it is a process that is difficult to carry out. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy in the UK recently published an information paper on clinical supervision, a process they consider will facilitate reflective practice within the clinical environment. The findings from this study highlight the importance of supporting senior therapists, through formal systems, in their attainment of reflective practice. **DESCRIPTION:** A reflective workshop on CPD was held for established clinical educators, who were senior therapists with a responsibility for educating students. Forty educators attended. The views and ideas of the educators were collated following the workshop, in addition, participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire. **OBSERVATIONS:** The participants identified that they rely more on experiential learning, in the form of discussion with peers and reflecting on practice than on formal courses. Eight participants were involved in clinical supervision, but the majority were not aware of the concept. Seventy percent of subjects had no formal time set aside for reflection and used their own personal time to reflect on their practice. Individuals spent more time facilitating the learning of others than their own CPD. Lack of time was a major barrier to learning. Management support was considered vital in fostering an environment conducive to learning. **CONCLUSION:** If senior clinicians are to develop within their role privileging the development needs of others is not a tenable option. Formal "time out" needs to be identified to reflect on the complexities of clinical practice. Clinical supervision offers an ideal environment for this activity. However, If such systems are to be successful they must become embedded within professional policy. The expectation for every practitioner should be that clinical supervision is the norm rather than the exception

