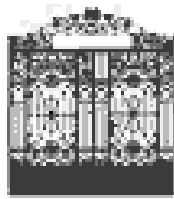


**CAREER AND CONTINUING  
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION  
INTENTIONS OF  
PHYSIOTHERAPY STUDENTS AT  
ZAGREB SCHOOL OF HEALTH  
STUDIES**



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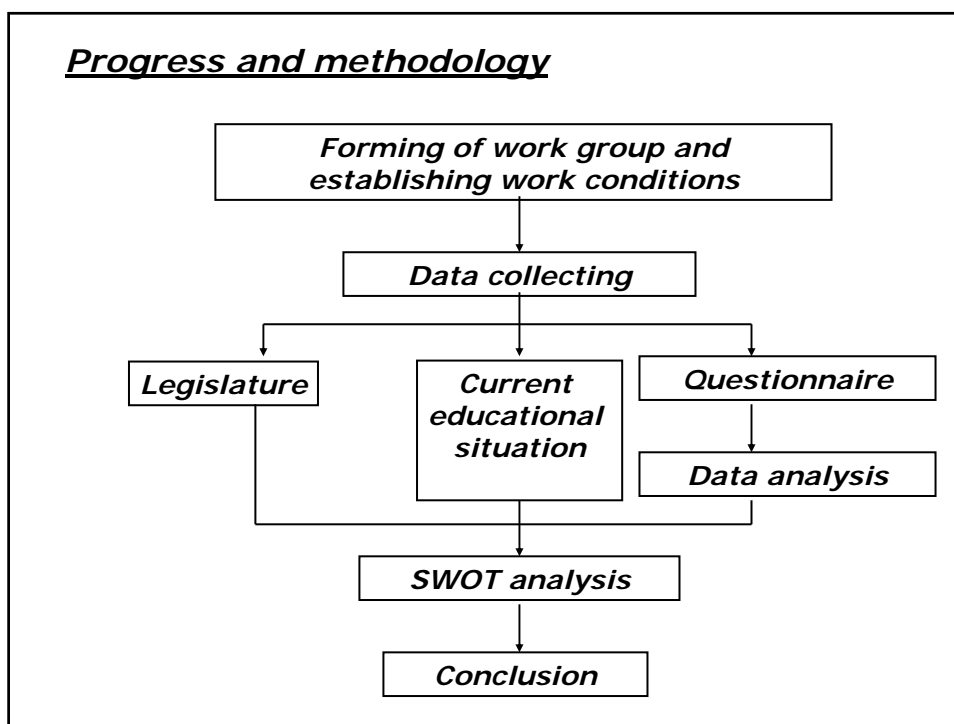
**Theoretical background**

*Starr (1982) defines profession as "an occupation that regulates itself through systematic, required training; that has a base in technical, specialized knowledge; and that has service rather than profit orientation enshrined in its code of ethics".*

*The profession has autonomy to control, organize, define, and develop the practice, education, and intake of new members free of outside control. Professional power is based on the formal knowledge possessed by the group and maintained by scientific activity (Freidson 1970, 1986, 1994).*

**Our initial statement**

*The new generation of physiotherapy students at Zagreb School of Health Studies is ready to accept the challenge of the developing profession and continuing education after graduation.*



**Legislature**

***New Law on Research Activity and Higher Education was passed in July 2003.***

***Before the new Law there was no possibility for postgraduate physiotherapy programs or any kind of postgraduate study.***

- ***Three-year physiotherapy program leading to "bachelor of physiotherapy" title - 180 ECTS***
- ***Possibility of organizing 4 year bachelor programs of physiotherapy - 240 ECTS***
- ***Possibility of organizing one to two year specialty master programs leading to "specialist of physiotherapy" title.***
- ***Continuation of study at some other faculty on master level***

**Current situation in education**

***3 physiotherapy schools in Croatia:***

- ***2 at Universities of Rijeka and Split***
- ***1 independent in Zagreb***
- ***3-year program, 2640 hours of education, out of which 900 hours of clinical rotations***

***About 80 students enrolled in Zagreb School of Health Studies every year in their first year of study.***

***No master or PhD's of physiotherapy, professors with physiotherapy and some additional degree (for example kinesiology, medicine or special education) and doctors of medicine.***

***Scarce research activity in physiotherapy field.***

**Questionnaire**

***27 items concerning:***

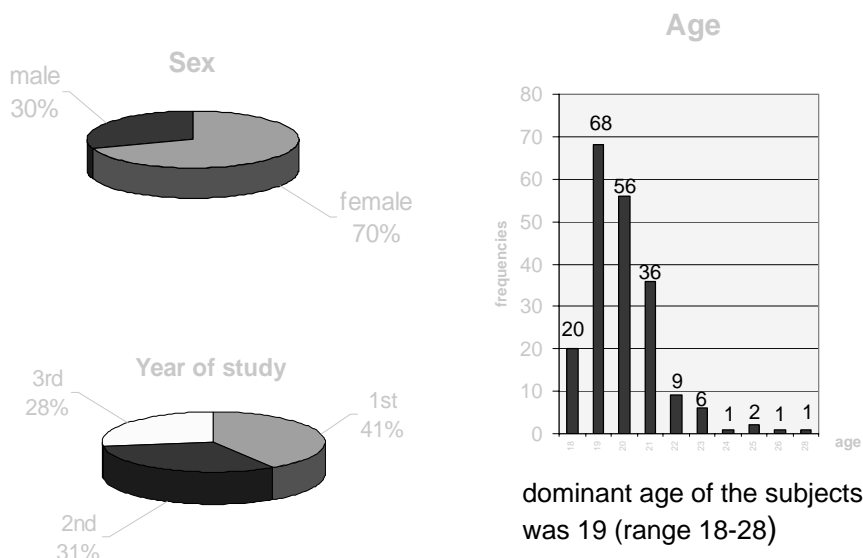
- ***general demographic data***
- ***students' career intentions***
- ***students' professional education plans***
- ***students' opinion about quality of education***

***Data obtained was entered and analyzed using the SPSS statistical package.***

***Subjects:***

***222 out of 250 physiotherapy students at Zagreb School of Health Studies during December 2003.***

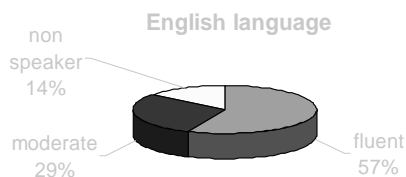
**Demographic structure of students**



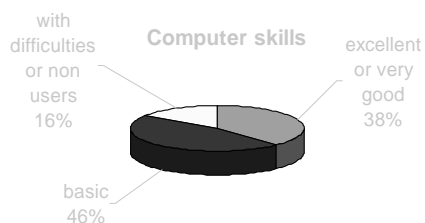
**Results**

**Foreign language knowledge**

- 99.1% speak some foreign language, fluent or moderate



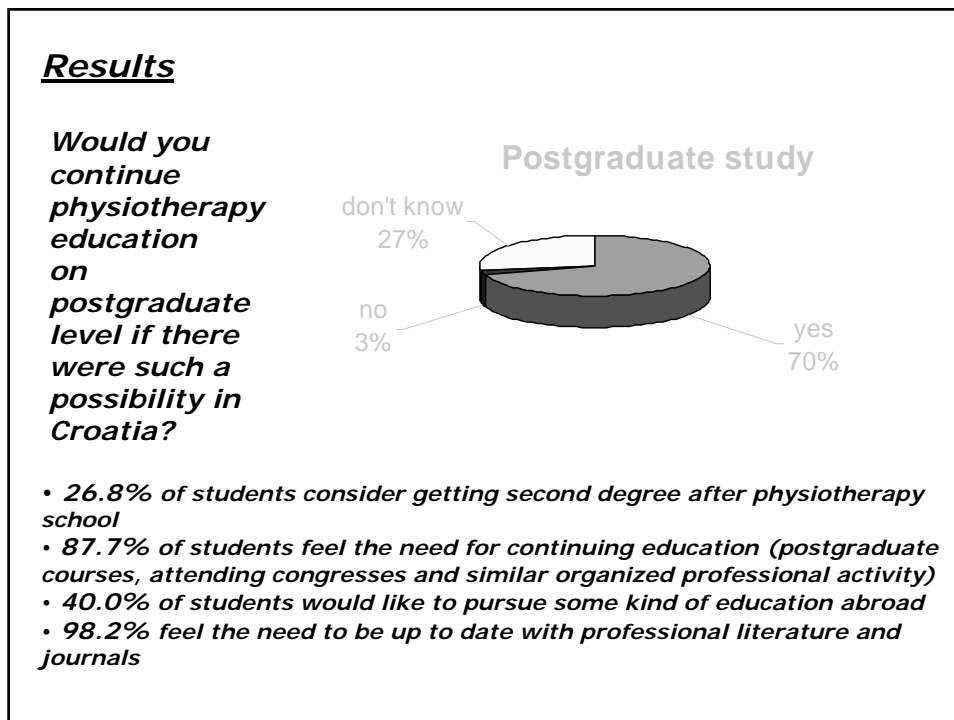
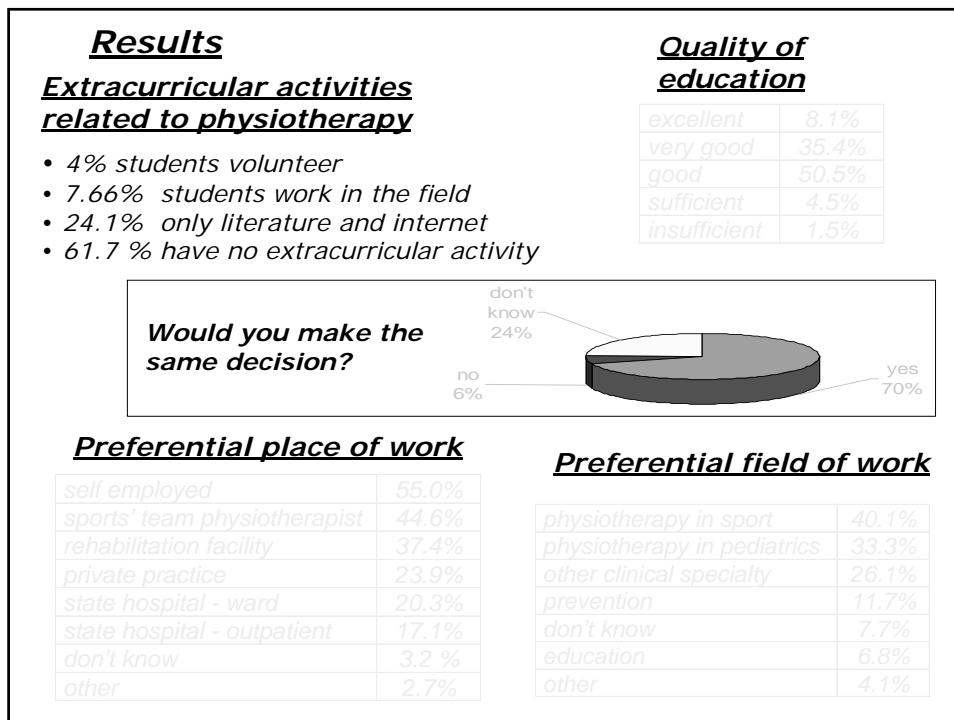
**Computer skills**



- 79.4% use the Internet
- 46.4% have e-mail addresses

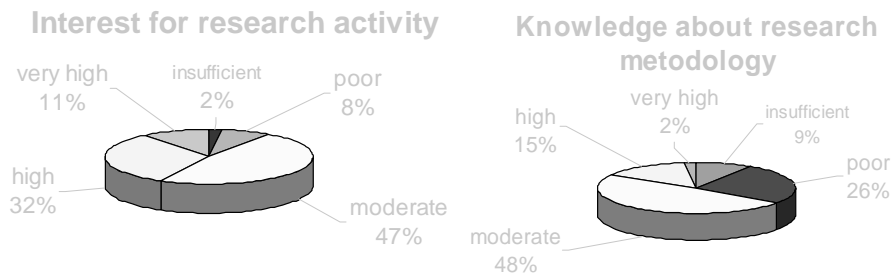
**Reasons for choosing physiotherapy as a profession**

- 81% students were interested in the field and it was the first choice to 74.1% students
- other reasons were: graduation from physiotherapy technician high school, profit, failing some other entrance exam or other reasons
- 93.7% of students want to work in the field after graduation



## **Results**

### **Interest and knowledge in research activities**



**Average interest in scientific work (1-5 scale) is 3.41, while self-assessed knowledge of the research process is 2.74**

## **Results**

### **Students' view of major problems in Croatian physiotherapy:**

- insufficient and outdated equipment: 51.4 %
- lack of team work: 33.8%
- therapist - patient relation: 30.6%
- lack of therapists' motivation: 30.2%
- lack of education: 26.6 %
- physiotherapists' relation with other health workers: 23.4%
- lack of autonomy: 22.1%
- other: 2.7%

### **What would students change in physiotherapy education if they could:**

- better organization of student services: 26.6%
- improve quality and quantity of clinical rotations: 25.2%
- organize postgraduate specialty programs: 15.3%
- improve quality and quantity of practical lectures: 12.6%
- improve access to professional literature: 8.6%
- improve student - professor/mentor relation: 7.7%
- reduce tuition: 5.4%
- better knowledge of basic sciences: 3.6%
- a lot of things: 2.7%
- improve teamwork capabilities: 1.8%
- better cooperation with similar institutions and associations: 1.8%
- better learning equipment: 0.9%

### **SWOT analysis**

**Strengths:** *students' computer literacy, knowledge of foreign languages, awareness of necessity of continuing postgraduate education, interest for research activities and postgraduate programs*

**Weaknesses:** *no extracurricular activities related to physiotherapy, not enough knowledge of research methodology, no research activity in Croatian physiotherapy*

**Opportunities:** *new Law on Research Activity and Higher Education, potential of new generation of physiotherapists, forming a group of educators with master and doctor of physiotherapy degrees*

**Threats:** *problems in organization and work environment in physiotherapy facilities, lack of team work and autonomy, lack of educational and material resources, not enough motivation of senior physiotherapists and professors*

### **Conclusion**

***Results of questionnaire confirm our initial statement.***

***Using established strengths, surpassing own weaknesses, using opportunities and respecting threats, it is possible to expect improvement of knowledge, autonomy, competency, education and development of physiotherapy profession in Croatia.***

***Students in our school are ready to accept the challenge of the developing profession but it is necessary to establish better educational infrastructure and possibility of postgraduate training.***

***Better education would lead to better definition, organization, quality of care and it would improve the profession and professional identity of physiotherapists in Croatia.***

**Acknowledgements**

• *We would like to thank our professors at Zagreb School of Health Studies:*

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*Olivera Petrak and Mirna Kostovic, professors of psychology*

• *students of physiotherapy at Zagreb School of Health Studies enrolled in 2003. academic year*

• *our parents for moral and financial support*

***Place of the  
next General  
Meeting of  
ER-WCPT is  
Zagreb,  
Croatia, 2006.***

***Welcome!***

***Thank You for  
Your Attention!***

