

Are Physiotherapy Student's Committed to Continuing Professional Development?

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PURPOSE: This is an investigation of whether the education of undergraduate physiotherapists results in a knowledge of, and positive disposition towards, continuing professional development (CPD). **RELEVANCE:** Today the half -life of professional competence is shorter than ever before. This, coupled with an increasing demand by stakeholders to demonstrate accountability this highlights the need of the individual to be an active participant in CPD, in order to maintain their competence and provide best practice. There was no previously published questionnaire or study on this subject **SUBJECTS:** A sample of convenience was used. Subjects were fourth year physiotherapy students who volunteered to participate from two Schools of Physiotherapy in Ireland. **METHODS AND MATERIALS:** An author- administered questionnaire was used. Seven open-ended and 8 closed-ended questions were created. The questionnaire was piloted prior to distribution. **ANALYSES:** Closed-ended questions were coded and entered into the Excel system. Results of the open-ended questions were grouped under key phrases chosen from the relevant literature and then coded and entered into Excel system **RESULTS:** The overall response rate was 65.9%, n=114. Results indicate that students had a good understanding of the term CPD and felt that involvement in it should be compulsory. However they were not aware of the full range of activities included in it. Courses, reading journals, on-the-job experience and contact with senior and other staff were viewed as the principle means of maintaining, developing and learning new skills. Students placed great importance on guidance and advice from members of staff for professional development and access to this was identified as the most important factor in choosing their first job. After undertaking a research project in their final year, most students are still willing to become involved in further research with the majority planning on undertaking higher degrees. **CONCLUSIONS** This study indicates that physiotherapy students are committed to life-long learning.