



An Introduction to a Theory Model ('Neues Denkmodell') For The Development of Physiotherapy as an Independent Profession and First Experience of Its Integration Into Undergraduate Education

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PURPOSE: A theory model has been described by Hueter-Becker (1997) in order to further develop physiotherapy as a profession independent from the traditional medical disciplines. The purpose of this project was to apply the model in paediatric physiotherapy education for undergraduate students. **RELEVANCE:** The model aims to promote the development of the holistic view needed to assess and treat patients effectively. Furthermore, it allows a more flexible, transparent and self-reflexive clinical reasoning and treatment process. The focus is oriented towards symptoms instead of diagnoses. The traditional curriculum tended to neglect the importance of these approaches. In order to shape students' views from the very beginning of their education the project became necessary. **DESCRIPTION:** The model is based on the idea of four domains whereupon physiotherapy has an effect. The domains are described as musculoskeletal system, development & control of movement, inner organs, experience & behaviour. They are intended to replace the traditional medical disciplines. Within the existing module 'paediatric physiotherapy' the model has been introduced. It has been applied in the assessment and treatment process that students underwent first in case examples and, at a later stage, with patients within their clinical internships. **OBSERVATIONS:** It could be shown that students handled the assessment and treatment of patients within some domains more competently compared to other domains. The obvious dominance of a domain like musculoskeletal system possibly derives from the way the actual curriculum is structured. Feedback from students was positive regarding the aims of the model. However, the evaluation of students in terms of the development of a holistic view turned out difficult. Weaknesses of the model became obvious whilst working with it and suggestions for improvement were discussed. **CONCLUSIONS:** The model demonstrated potential and utility for undergraduate students when promoting holistic and effective therapy. However, a sound evaluation of the model's aims requires additional research. Further development of the model as well as ways to integrate it into the curriculum are also needed.

