

10th January 2014

Attention:

Helse og omsorgsdepartementet (HOD)
Kari Sonderland, Director General &
Elisabeth Salvesen, Deputy Director General

Dear officials of the Ministry of Health:

RE: Regulation of the physiotherapy profession in Norway

We understand from our member organisation in Norway, the Norsk Fysioterapeutforbund, that the Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services is considering a proposal to classify physiotherapists who have additional further qualifications in the field as a new profession. This is counter to international policy and practice and we hope that the information provided here will be informative as you consider this matter.

Mobilization/manipulation have been core entry level skills of physical therapists since the beginning of the profession and these entry level competencies are referenced in all relevant WCPT documents. Additional education/qualification is an extension to the entry level education, not preparation for a new profession.

Protection of title

WCPT's policy statement "Protection of title" clearly states that the professional titles "physical therapist" and "physiotherapist" and all abbreviations referring to these titles (eg "PT", "FT", "physio") are the sole preserve of persons who hold qualifications approved by WCPT's member organisations. WCPT believes it is in the public interest to protect the professional names and titles as part of national legislation/regulation/recognition. The development of higher level skills beyond those at entry level, in areas of physical therapy practice such as manual therapy, acupuncture, respiratory practice, do not create a new profession but are advancements in professional knowledge and competency. See www.wcpt.org/policy/ps-protection-title.

Specialisation

WCPT's policy statement on specialisation supports the right of its member organisations to make national policies which permit practice specialisation, where such activity is considered by them to benefit the public and the profession by promoting higher standards of physical therapy. WCPT advocates that member organisations should encourage and support the following:

- The qualification of a physical therapist specialist will include a formal process for testing and acknowledging the advanced clinical knowledge and skills of the speciality.
- Specialisation is not to be considered, or implied, to mean a limitation on practice. All areas of physical therapy will remain open to all appropriately qualified physical therapists, both specialist and non-specialist, practising within their respective levels of competence.



Formal recognition of physiotherapists with additional qualifications and experience has the potential to provide increased benefits to the health and wellbeing of patients/clients, to reduce health system costs, and to encourage the retention and motivation of senior highly qualified members of the profession.

See also WCPT's guideline on specialisation in physical therapy: www.wcpt.org/policy/ps-specialisation and www.wcpt.org/sites/wcpt.org/files/files/PS_Specialisation_Spet2011.pdf.

Specialisation among the member organisations of WCPT

A small number of WCPT's member organisations have defined programmes of specialisation. An example is the Titling and Specialisation programme of the Australian Physiotherapy Association www.physiotherapy.asn.au/APAWCM/Careers/Career_Paths/Titling.aspx. The American Physical Therapy Association also has a specialisation process. See further details in the appendix.

These and other specialist certification programmes were established to provide formal recognition for physical therapists with advanced clinical knowledge, experience, and skills in a special area of practice and to assist consumers and the health care community in identifying these physical therapists. The programmes do not create a new profession but recognise higher levels of attainment within the physiotherapy profession across a range of areas.

WCPT does not know of any situations where a specialist programme is regulated by the government.

Glossary

Recognising the developments in advancing the scope of practice and specialisation the following terms from WCPT's glossary are pertinent:

Specialisation — is the application of advanced clinical competence by a physical therapist qualified in a defined area within the scope of practice recognised as physical therapy.

Specialist physical therapist — is a physical therapist who has formally demonstrated an ability to apply advanced clinical competence in a defined clinical area, within the scope of practice recognised as physical therapy. A specialist physical therapist will work primarily in a specific area of clinical and /or teaching practice, but would be expected to also be involved in research and evaluation and practice/service development relevant to their practice setting.

See the appendix for further relevant definitions.

Education levels

Entry level qualifications for physiotherapy vary internationally and include the following entry points: diploma, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree and Professional Doctorate. Attainment of a Master's degree in physiotherapy does not indicate a new profession. See www.wcpt.org/guidelines/entry-level-education



**World Confederation
for Physical Therapy**

International Federation of Orthopaedic Manipulative Physical Therapists (IFOMPT)

IFOMPT is a recognised subgroup of WCPT. It promotes and maintains high standards of specialist education and clinical practice for manual/musculoskeletal physiotherapists. It has produced standards for the development of postgraduate education programmes underpinning specialisation in this field in physiotherapy. Those who complete the education and achieve the standard are recognised as having higher level physical therapy skills in manual therapy and are not a different profession.

Direct access and advanced scope of practice

WCPT carried out a mapping exercise to establish the prevalence of direct access to physiotherapy services globally. The report is attached and is available on the WCPT website along with peer reviewed publications arising from the work: www.wcpt.org/node/100179.

What is considered advanced/extended scope varies across the countries represented by WCPT's member organisations as it depends on how scope of practice is initially defined. In the UK, for example, physiotherapists assess fitness for work and they also have prescribing rights (see appendix). There are also developments to support physical therapists having prescribing rights in Australia.

We hope that this overview of the international context is informative and that it will be helpful in your considerations in Norway.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marilyn Moffat". The script is cursive and fluid.

Marilyn Moffat
WCPT President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah A. Bazin". The script is cursive and fluid.

Sarah Bazin
Chair, European Region WCPT



APPENDIX

Specialisation among the member organisations of WCPT

A small number of WCPT's member organisations have defined programmes of specialisation. An example is the Titling and Specialisation programme of the Australian Physiotherapy Association www.physiotherapy.asn.au/APAWCM/Careers/Career_Paths/Titling.aspx. This provides a pathway for the recognition of higher level knowledge and competency. They currently have a recognised programme of specialisation within:

- cardiorespiratory
- continence & women's health
- gerontology
- musculoskeletal
- neurology
- occupational health
- paediatrics
- sports

The American Physical Therapy Association is another member organisation of WCPT with a specialisation process. The specialist certification programme was established to provide formal recognition for physical therapists with advanced clinical knowledge, experience, and skills in a special area of practice and to assist consumers and the health care community in identifying these physical therapists. The programme covers:

- cardiovascular and pulmonary
- clinical electrophysiology
- geriatrics
- neurology
- orthopaedics, which covers manual and manipulative therapy
- paediatrics
- sports
- women's health

The programmes do not create a new profession but recognise higher levels of attainment within the physiotherapy profession across a range of areas.

WCPT does not know of any situations where a specialist programme is regulated by the government.

Glossary

Recognising the developments in advancing the scope of practice and specialisation the following terms from WCPT's glossary are also pertinent:

Advanced clinical competence — is the demonstration of knowledge and skills beyond those required for entry to basic professional practice.



Specialisation — is the application of advanced clinical competence by a physical therapist qualified in a defined area within the scope of practice recognised as physical therapy.

Specialist physical therapist — is a physical therapist who has formally demonstrated an ability to apply advanced clinical competence in a defined clinical area, within the scope of practice recognised as physical therapy. A specialist physical therapist will work primarily in a specific area of clinical and /or teaching practice, but would be expected to also be involved in research and evaluation and practice/service development relevant to their practice setting.

Physical therapy speciality — is a prescribed area of physical therapy practice formally recognised by a member organisation within which it is possible for a physical therapist to develop and demonstrate higher levels of knowledge and skills.

Prescribing by physiotherapists in the UK

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy has a dedicated area of its website on prescribing: <http://www.csp.org.uk/professional-union/practice/medicines-use-prescribing> . The following information is taken from the website:

An understanding of medicines use to support physiotherapy intervention is an integral part of professional practice through all stages of ones career.

Prescribing qualifications

Prescribing as a Supplementary and/or an Independent prescriber is an advanced practice activity, only undertaken by specialist physiotherapists who have undertaken compulsory additional education in prescribing and been awarded an additional HCPC annotation.

Physiotherapists may have one of two prescribing qualifications:

1. **Supplementary Prescriber (SP)**

A single prescribing qualification awarded from 2005 onwards by HEI's approved by the HCPC. Supplementary prescribers may prescribe any medicine that is defined within a written Clinical Management Plan. Supplementary prescribers who wish to add independent prescribing (IP) to their scope of practice must undertake a suitable HCPC approved IP programme in order to add IP to their annotation.

2. **Independent/Supplementary Prescriber (IP/SP)**

A dual prescribing qualification available from 2014. On successful completion of an HCPC approved combined prescribing programme, physiotherapists will have both SP and IP annotations added to their HCPC entry. The physiotherapist can use either supplementary or independent prescribing frameworks depending on the context and circumstances of their work.

Fitness for Work reports in the UK

Physiotherapists carryout fitness to work assessments in the UK. There is a dedicated area on the CSP website: <http://www.csp.org.uk/professional-union/practice/ahp-advisory-fitness-work-report>.

Fra: Brenda J Myers, WCPT [mailto:bmyers@wcpt.org]

Sendt: 13. januar 2014 12:11

Til: Postmottak HOD

Emne: Hoering - forslag til forskrift om aa autorisere manuellterapeuter(fysioterapeuter med videreutdanning i manuellterapi) i henhold til helsepersonelloven

Please see the attached letter from the World Confederation for Physical Therapy addressing the international perspective on professional title and specialisation in physical therapy.

Please feel most welcome to contact me should you have any questions.

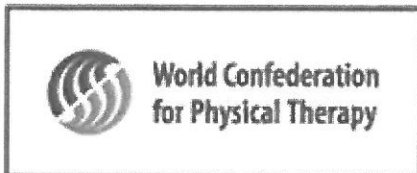
Kind regards

Brenda J Myers
Secretary General

World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT)

11 Belgrave Road
London SW1V 1RB
United Kingdom

T +44 (0)20 7931 6465
www.wcpt.org



A promotional banner for the World Health Professions Regulation Conference 2014. The background is a light grey with a dark grey horizontal band at the bottom. The main text "World Health Professions Regulation Conference 2014" is in a large, bold, dark grey font. To the right, the dates "17 & 18 May 2014" and location "Geneva, Switzerland" are in a smaller font. Below the main text is the website "www.whpa.org/whpcr2014". On the left, the text "Register now! Get info here" is in a bold, white font. On the right, there is a small rectangular image showing a fountain in a park setting.

The World Health Professions Regulation Conference 2014 is hosted by the World Health Professions Alliance



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