



International Network of Physiotherapy Regulatory Authorities

Facilitating international cooperation and collaboration

Webcast:

A global survey of direct access and patient self-referral to physical therapy: informing practice, policy and discourse; June 5, 2013

The results of the first global survey of direct access/patient self-referral were recently published in *Physiotherapy* (Journal of the UK Chartered Society of Physiotherapy) and *Physical Therapy* (Journal of the American Physical Therapy Association). This webinar considered key findings from the study, including main supporters, barriers, facilitators and future directions.

Highlights:

An online global survey was conducted to WCPT member countries (72) with a response rate of 68%.

Key findings were assessed, including identification of support, barriers and facilitators. Responses were diverse; in 80% of responding countries PT is regulated by legislation. Of these, 57% (57/71) permit direct access. Of countries where PT is not regulated by legislation, 71% allow direct access. Overall, 58% of the responders permit direct access/patient self-referral of some kind, either in the public and/or public sector.

Direct access may also depend on the kind of reimbursement scheme in place.

Another interesting finding was that direct access also informs scope of practice, such as referral to specialist, imaging and prescription giving by PTs.

The survey also asked the respondent's opinion regarding PT's opinion of direct access, as well as what patients, politicians and the medical profession think. Results showed that 72% of PTs supported DA; 84% of the responders felt that patients supported direct access (DA); but only 35% of politicians and 16% of medical professionals were believed to support DA. Interestingly, the survey showed that several factors could be both facilitators to DA as well as barriers, depending on context. These factors included: legislation, politicians, economics and professional leadership (or lack of). Critical to promotion of DA: evidence of effectiveness in cost containment, as well as positive patient outcomes.