

A031 HSCI

Are New Graduate Physical Therapists Prepared to Treat Pelvic Dysfunction?

Abstract

BACKGROUND

Physical therapists (PTs) treat a wide variety of health conditions, including pelvic dysfunction (PD). PD can refer to dysfunction of either the bony structure of the pelvis or the pelvic floor muscles. Common results of PD include urinary and bowel incontinence, chronic pelvic pain, pelvic organ prolapse, and painful intercourse. Physical therapy is often utilized to treat these disorders utilizing therapeutic interventions such as exercise, electrical stimulation and biofeedback. Since the pelvic area is typically considered private, some treatments are reserved for PTs who specialize in pelvic health. However, entry level PTs are still expected to have a certain level of knowledge and skills to treat PD.

PURPOSE

This study aims to assess whether new graduates feel their curriculum has prepared them to treat PD in their patients.

METHODS

A baseline of entry-level knowledge was established in accordance with:

- CAPTE accreditation standards
- the Guideline for Women's Health Content in Professional Physical Therapist Education Provided by the APTA Section on Women's Health
- APTA Minimum Required Skills of Physical Therapist Graduates at Entry Level

Using these guidelines, a survey will be constructed and distributed to 3rd year and new grad PTs to assess whether they meet these standards.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

CAPTE standards specify that each program's curriculum must provide content and learning experiences for all major systems, including the genital and reproductive system and the renal and urologic system. All three guides emphasize the importance of learning skills that apply across the lifespan and continuum of care. This is important because PD can affect anyone, although it is most common in women and adults over the age of 55. Because these populations make up a large portion of physical therapy patients, it is crucial to know whether new graduate PTs have adequate knowledge to treat these issues