

Reference: Froment FP, Olson KA, Hooper TL, Shaffer SM, Sizer PS, Woodhouse LJ, Brismée JM. Direct Access Advantage for Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Scope of Practice Throughout WCPT and IFOMPT Affiliated Countries

Context: Physical Therapy profession development relates to advanced practice physiotherapy (APP) privileges. Direct access, or patient self-referral to physical therapists, is a manifestation of professional autonomy. In countries/jurisdictions where direct access exists, a positive bearing on physical therapists' scope of practice in terms of assessment, diagnosis, and referral to specialists is displayed. To date, no study has investigated in detail musculoskeletal APP privileges within countries that are World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) Member Organizations (MOs).

Objective: To investigate the status of musculoskeletal APP privileges for physical therapists worldwide, and examine direct access right for countries that are vs. are not members of the International Federation of Orthopaedic Manipulative Physical Therapists (IFOMPT).

Design: Cross-sectional study with descriptive and exploratory online surveys.

Participants: Two surveys were sent to the following categories of participants: (1) IFOMPT delegates completed an IFOMPT survey; and (2) WCPT delegates completed a WCPT survey.

Intervention: An electronic survey-based descriptive and exploratory investigation was conducted. Descriptive statistics were used to assess variability between WCPT MOs and inferential analyses examined the strength of the relationships among the number and types of APP privileges with: (1) country affiliation to IFOMPT, (2) direct access right to physical therapy, and (3) post-professional training required.

Main Outcome Measures: Direct access right had statistically significant higher prevalence in countries that were IFOMPT MOs versus those that were not IFOMPT with 72.7% versus 44.4% ($p=.03$). The mean number of APP rights was 4.44 (median 4) in countries without direct access and 9.20 (median 9) in countries with direct access. The number of APP rights for countries with direct access (mean rank=27.64) were significantly higher than for countries without direct access (mean rank=51.02, $U=329$, $z=-4.489$, $p\leq.001$).

Results. Two APP privileges showed a significant difference and were less likely to require post-professional training for countries that were affiliated with IFOMPT versus those not affiliated with IFOMPT: (1) direct access post-professional training requirement prevalence of 4.2% versus 35% ($p=.02$); and (2) manipulation post-professional training prevalence of 37.5% versus 63.9% ($p=.03$).

Conclusion. IFOMPT MOs demonstrated higher APP privilege prevalence for direct access. APP rights for countries with direct access were significantly higher than for countries without direct access. Additionally, the results showed that countries affiliated with IFOMPT presented greater ease to obtain direct access and manipulation rights without additional requirement of post-professional training.