

Global Physiotherapy Congress

November 17-18, 2016 Atlanta, USA

Changes and challenges in physiotherapy practice in Ethiopia

Endashaw Abera

Ethiopian Physiotherapy Association-World Confederation for Physical Therapy, Ethiopia

Physiotherapy practice in Ethiopia has undergone some changes during the few decades, responding to general social and medical developments. The greatest changes and professional expansion have taken place since 1990's. Today, physiotherapy is an integral part of the national health care system and physiotherapists are important collaborator in the basic health care team in the communities. The greatest challenges for physiotherapists and their practice in Ethiopia are multifarious. The aim of this paper is to call attention to the changes and challenges in physiotherapy practice in Ethiopia. The Delphi method was used to obtain information from key informants involved in the area of physiotherapy practice from variety of the country. The majority of the participants were physiotherapists who had experienced physiotherapy practice either as a student or as a registered and licensed practitioner. Data were analyzed into subject and sent back to respondents for confirmation. The most important changes highlighted were: Public awareness up on the practice, recognition of the physiotherapist as indispensable medical care before the policy makers, and registration & licensure of the professionals. The most important challenges were: No formal continuous professional development (CPD) scheme yet in place, limitation on the public awareness, professionals dependency syndrome, discouraging working environment and lack of medical equipment for the quality care, private business taking advantage of the profession at the expense of the practice and most importantly lack of evidence-based practice. In conclusion, harmonized support and corporation are sought to transform the physiotherapy practice and to tackle the challenges faced by the Ethiopian physiotherapists in this resource limited country where physiotherapy medical service is still in the high demand.

Biography

Endashaw Abera has completed his Under-graduate degree in Physiotherapy from University of Gondar, Health Science College and Post-graduate studies from Addis Ababa University, School of Public Health in Health Informatics. Currently, he is the President of Ethiopian Physiotherapy Association, and working as Clinical Supervisor at CURE International, Ethiopia.

endashawu.abera@cureinternational.org

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