

Making every contact count for physical activity: Equipping tomorrow's physiotherapists to deliver high quality physical activity interventions

Lowe A. Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK. @annalowephysio Gates A.B. Exercise Works! Derby, UK. @exerciseworks Callaghan P. The University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK. @profmanpat

Aims: To address physical inactivity as a key, modifiable risk factor for morbidity, disease related disability, and early mortality and to highlight the potential contribution of future physiotherapists to this national public health priority.

The objectives of the project were threefold;

- (i) to create high quality teaching resources on physical activity and long term conditions ,
- (ii) to support Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to achieve excellence in their delivery of undergraduate physical activity learning,
- (iii) to equip student physiotherapists to deliver evidence-based interventions to increase physical activity in people with long term conditions.

Methods: In 2014 Exercise Works! developed resources for all UK undergraduate medical degrees on exercise medicine and chronic disease. In September 2015, these resources were made available for all undergraduate nursing, midwifery and allied health professions courses internationally.

The teaching resources are a series of approximately 30 presentations that cover topics relevant to physical activity and long term conditions, titles include "Cancer and physical activity" "Obesity and exercise" "Diabetes and exercise" and "Dementia and exercise". The resources are securely housed on the web and are editable to enable HEIs to adapt them to suit their needs.

Sheffield Hallam University is an example of one HEI that has integrated the resources into its undergraduate curriculum. A webfolio has been created that houses the resources and approximately 300 physiotherapy students now have secure access. This augments the existing delivery of physical activity and exercise in long term conditions within the undergraduate physiotherapy curriculum.

Outcomes: Evaluation of the quality of the resources was funded by Public Health England and carried out by The University of Nottingham. An international panel of experts concluded that the resources rated highly for relevance, evidence-base and for the clarity and relevance of the learning outcomes. The resources are now being used nationally and internationally. Over 400 secure resource downloads from schools of medicine and health have been recorded.

The resources have been successfully embedded at Sheffield Hallam University and evaluation of one module shows that 58% of students surveyed had accessed the resources and all felt that it complimented the module. Students gave a mean score of 7/10 for overall quality.

Conclusions: Physical inactivity is a national public health priority and promoting physical activity is a key competence in contemporary health care. Next steps include encouraging other HEIs to use the resources and encouraging adoption by other health care profession courses.

This innovative project has secured the prominence of physical activity and exercise content in undergraduate curricula. In doing so it has helped to equip tomorrow's physiotherapists to address non-communicable diseases and physical inactivity.

Take home message: This special interest report shows how partnership working can enhance undergraduate curricula. It highlights the need for curricula to reflect contemporary healthcare issues.