

Editorial

Continuous Professional Development Courses (CPDs) in Pakistan

Physical therapy/Physiotherapy is not a new profession, some sort of physical therapy practice even existed in Europe from 1500s-1700s¹. The physical therapy profession is also not part of the alternative medicine but it is part and parcel of the modern medical system which is developed by the father of western medicine Hippocrates. He used to utilize exercise and muscle re-education for a variety of orthopedic diseases and injuries ¹. In the develop world physical therapy education is very advanced up to doctoral level but in some part of the glob it is still in the developing stages. The traditional practice of physical therapy without any nomenclature has been practiced in this part of the world since 1800s but the formal education program had been started in 1955 (School of physiotherapy, JPMC, Karachi)². One of the frequently ask question is about the status of the profession, so physical therapy fulfill all the requirements of an autonomous profession including unique body of knowledge, service has to be beneficial for the community, code of ethics to follow in practice, accountability and autonomy and based on these characteristics world Health Organization (WHO) categories it as autonomous health profession³.

With the passage of time many challenges develop and open new horizons for the professionals, same is true for the physical therapy profession started with a two years program after SSC later on converted to three years diploma and in 1961 university of Karachi affiliated the 1st professional degree in physical therapy B.Sc. (physiotherapy) which is later on upgraded to a four year BS PT degree in 1999. The mature entry level professional degree in physical therapy Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) was introduced in Pakistan in 2008 and recognized by the higher education commission of Pakistan (HEC) in 2011⁴. The trend of higher education in the physical therapy profession also started in 2008. Many universities now offer specialized programs including; Orthopedic manual physical therapy (OMPT), Neuromuscular Physical Therapy (NMPT), Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Physical Therapy (CPPT) and Sports Physical Therapy (SPT)⁵. Most recently PhD program in physical therapy and rehabilitation sciences also has been launched by few universities which will be helpful to produce quality research and promote evidence based practice in Pakistan.

It is very important for a health professional to be aware of the current trends in the profession and also to be capable to face new challenges in the health care system. This objective can be achieved through advanced degree programs, short skilled course and fellowships in the relevant profession but it is not possible for every professional to go for higher education or fellowships but they can easily enhanced their competencies through continuous professional development courses (CPDs). The CPDs concept in Pakistan was 1st introduced formally in 2009 by Riphah International University and since then offer workshops and seminars on various topics for rehabilitation professionals. CPDs is the prime responsibility of the professionals to keep their knowledge and skills current so that they can deliver the high quality of service that safeguards

the public and meets the expectations of patients/clients and the requirements of their profession. Most of the time it is required by professional organizations or licensing authority who regulate the profession.

CPDs ensure the capabilities of the professionals and maintain and enhance the knowledge and skills to stay relevant and up to date. CPDs keep the professionals aware of the changing trends and directions in the profession. CPDs helps the professionals continue to make a meaningful contribution to the profession and make the person become more effective in the workplace. It also helps in advancing career and move into the new positions where an individual can lead, manage, influence, coach and mentor other professionals. It is a good source of advancing the body of professional knowledge and adaptation of new technology in the profession. It also promote the evidence based practice and specialized practice in the profession, so CPD should be mandatory especially in the rehabilitation professions to make sure quality intervention and safety of the patients/clients.

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