

## Regulation of Physical Therapy Profession in Pakistan

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Appropriate regulation is vital for any profession in the current globally connected world and is carried out dually by professional and Government bodies. As a global example the physical therapy (PT) profession in United States of America (USA) is professionally guided by American Physical Therapy Association and governed by The Federation of State Boards for Physical Therapy (FSBPT).<sup>1</sup> In Pakistan there are examples in other health care professions like Medical, Pakistan Medical Association at Professional level and Pakistan Medical & Dental Council at Government level and are working with harmony.<sup>2</sup> Academic education and Patient care (clinical Practice) are two major domains of any health care profession to be taken care in every state/ country.

In Pakistan there are Pakistan Physical Therapy association (PPTA) founded in 2008 and is trying streamline the profession in the country at professional level, but also striving for the government body with the title of “Pakistan Physical Therapy Council (PPTC)” to regulate the profession at the government level. The ground work for the PPTC was started in 2009 and after untiring efforts of the PPTA officials the draft was approved by Federal cabinet of Pakistan in May 2018 but still need a lot of hard work to successfully implement after the legislation by the national assembly of Pakistan. It will keep check on both PT clinical practice in health care institutions and education in universities.<sup>3</sup>

A PT professional body always gives vision the profession along with strategic plan to guide the PT community for work towards materializing the vision. Its core responsibilities are to define the scope of practice, to assure quality PT care, to work for innovation (research), develop patient / client centric approach, provide unrestricted access to PT care, imitate advocacy for the

profession and collaborate with the other health care professions along with optimizing movement to improve human performance. The PPTA is working in the country for the last 10 years and is the only professional body representing Physical Therapists in the country. It has the current members' body of 2510 through its presence in Islamabad capital territory and 4 provinces; Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. PPTA became the member of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) in 2011 and thus started representing the PT community internationally and connect it with global PT.<sup>4</sup>

The Government PT regulatory bodies assure safe and quality PT care to the community by focusing on licensure for PT practice, States rights, states responsibilities, professionals' standards, education, leadership and financial stability of the PT organizations.<sup>5</sup> The Higher Education of Pakistan (HEC) is the government body taking care of higher education in Pakistan under government legislations. HEC started working on the uniform curriculum for entry level Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) in Pakistan by formulating the National Curriculum overview committee (NCRC), which comprised PTs academicians from the key universities offering this program. It successfully completed the task and developed the first ever uniform curriculum for DPT in 2011. There are currently no criteria or guidelines for starting a PT education institution and PT professional are facing mushrooming of PT institutions. A total of 150 or more PT institutions were developed in last decade, which were only 10 or less before and only few are meeting international standards and majority deficient in infrastructures, faculty and clinical training facilities.

In PT care was only available at tertiary care hospital in large cities only but now in Punjab and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa provinces PT care facility is available at district and tehsil level too, but still need more attention in Sindh and Baluchistan Provinces. We are also facing challenges in private PT practice and recently in some provinces the government started registering the private medical and dental clinics but not covering the PT private clinics although PPTA is working for it. The role of the PPTA and HEC is admirable for their work done for the PT profession in the last decade but there is still dire need for an independent PT regulatory body (PPTC).<sup>6</sup>

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