Reviewer's report

Title: Physiotherapists’ views on certification, specialization and extended role practice in rheumatology in Canada

Version: 1 Date: 3 December 2008

Reviewer: Krysia Dziedzic

Reviewer's report:

This is a very interesting survey and very timely with the publication of international recommendations and guidelines for the Management of Arthritis. How ‘best care’ for people with arthritis can be delivered is currently under investigation. Training of health care professionals is key to the implementation of ‘best care’.

The survey was undertaken with robust measures for participation and follow-up. Despite this, participation was lower than had been hoped, however the authors acknowledged the limitations of the survey and the generalisability of findings.

The survey is important in helping to interpret the training needs of physiotherapists in implementing good practice in the management of arthritis. For example the survey highlights the discordance between physiotherapists’ satisfaction with coverage of community resources in their training and the importance of self-management approaches. It shows a clear evidence - practice gap which needs addressing.

The terms certification, specialization and extended role practice should be explained clearly in the introduction and an additional table may be helpful here, simply to define the different terms and to illustrate what each of the roles might cover e.g. the term ‘extended scope practitioner’ could also be an ‘advanced practitioner’.

The difficulty in interpreting the different roles may be simply because of unfamiliarity with Canadian physiotherapy practice. Was there any indication in the pilot that it was unclear to participants, and how might this influence their ratings of agreement or disagreement with some of the questions around roles?

The introduction also talks about primary therapists and career advancement for physiotherapists practising in orthopaedics. Again how these roles might fit with the definitions above would be useful to illustrate in a table. If the same terminology could be used throughout this would be helpful.

Minor

Abstract postal survey (methods line 2) instead of mail survey
Page 6, 3rd line Correction spelling ‘and’
Table 1. Explain the letter f in the column with percentages.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests