World Physiotherapy
Europe region

Position Statement – Physiotherapy in Primary Care in the Europe Region

Professional Practice Working Group (PPWG)

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POSITION STATEMENT – PHYSIOTHERAPY IN PRIMARY CARE IN THE EUROPE REGION

Europe Region

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It is the position of the Europe Region of World Physiotherapy that physiotherapists, as providers of quality healthcare, have a central and fundamental role in Primary Care. The Europe Region calls on European countries to have physiotherapists as core members of their primary care teams. The Europe Region is a member of the European Forum on Primary Care.

Physiotherapy in Primary Care is a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, patient centred and community-oriented approach, that supports first-contact, accessible, continuous, comprehensive, and coordinated person-focused care[1].

Physiotherapists' qualifications and their ability to screen/assess[2], diagnose and provide appropriate treatment or referral[3] have positioned them as important providers of quality health care within the primary care team, providing services for individuals and populations to develop, maintain and restore maximum movement and functional ability throughout the lifespan[4].

Optimising functioning is instrumental to a patient's wellbeing, regardless of the underlying health condition. Timely access to primary care intervention can substantially reduce the prevalence and delay the onset of disabling effects of chronic conditions in adults and children[5].

Physiotherapists in primary care provide a multifaceted role that includes conducting thorough assessments to identify both physical and mental health risks, providing rehabilitation and health promotion interventions and fostering self-management through education, empowerment and shared responsibility[6].

Physiotherapists deliver sustainable clinical practice[7] supporting lifestyle change and patient empowerment[8] providing effective, comparatively low-cost high-value option, and addressing the growing demand for health services as well as the increasing costs associated with delivering these services across Europe[9-11]. The safety and efficacy of physiotherapy in primary care is well established[12,13], as is its effect on reducing high and over utilisation of other medical services[14].

Physiotherapy is an essential, evidence-based component of primary care. Physiotherapists' expertise in assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and health promotion positions them as central providers within multidisciplinary teams, delivering accessible, high-value care across the lifespan. Their involvement not only improves patient outcomes and satisfaction but also supports sustainable healthcare by reducing costs, optimising resource use, and addressing the growing demand for health services. As healthcare systems evolve to meet new challenges, the role of physiotherapy in primary care will remain fundamental to achieving better health for individuals and communities throughout Europe.

This document replaces the Position statement of Primary Care in the European Region (2024). The 2018 Statement on Physiotherapy in Primary Care is retained as a reference document.

USEFUL WEBSITES ON PRIMARY CARE

Physiotherapy in Primary Care | The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
European forum for primary care – European forum for primary care
WHO Primary health care

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