

## The changing scope of curricula and health needs – what’s in and what’s out in the Asia Western Pacific Region

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The purpose of the presentation is to discuss the discordance between curricula taught in physiotherapy schools in the Asia Western Pacific Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) and contemporary health needs; and explore ways the profession in Australasia can assist other member organisations to promote physiotherapy. The Region is demographically and geographically the most diverse of WCPT’s five regions. There are wide variations in life expectancy and access to health care, for example ratios of physiotherapists per head of population vary from 1:2,200 in Australia to 1:250,000 in the Philippines. As well, risk associated with occupational health, road traffic accidents and natural disasters varies widely amongst the countries. However all countries regardless of their socioeconomic status or topography have a burgeoning problem associated with non-communicable diseases. Mortality data from the World Health Organisation show that ischaemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, chronic respiratory conditions and diabetes are amongst the leading causes of death in all population groups. Such non-communicable diseases are largely associated with lifestyle, and physiotherapists as experts in physical rehabilitation have the capacity to play a leading role in prevention of these diseases, as well as in managing the consequences of the disease processes. Yet healthcare professionals including physiotherapists have been criticised for not being sufficiently responsive to client needs. Furthermore, evidence from a survey conducted across a range of pre-entry programmes in the Asia Western Pacific and other regions of the WCPT confirms there is discordance between content taught in curricula and leading healthcare priorities.

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