

Internationalisation of Higher Education: Inclusion of Socio-cultural Skills in a Physiotherapy Programme

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ABSTRACT This study sought to investigate the socio-cultural competences that could be considered for inclusion in Physiotherapy education. Also investigated are the skills required to functions as physiotherapists in the global or international arena. The design for this study was a prospective survey design. Socio-cultural skills required to function internationally were assessed. Data was collected with a self administered questionnaire. Responses are reported in percentages. The strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) responses were summed together as levels of agreement. Thirty final year physiotherapy students participated in this study. The age of the participants ranged between 20 and 35 years. Flexibility as a socio-cultural skill recorded the highest agreement with a response rate of 96.9 percent, while respect and awareness of differences in behaviour and attitude to health care were 90.6 percent each; Awareness of multicultural identity, cross cultural awareness and management of stress each recorded score of 87.5 percent. The agreement response of 81.25 percent, was recorded for empathy while ability to interact with others was 75 percent; and proficiency in a foreign language recorded the least score of 25 percent. Flexibility of practitioners, demonstration of empathy and awareness of multicultural diversity were considered important socio-cultural skills that should be considered for inclusion in a physiotherapy curriculum. These competences are important because students need to move from a position of understanding that culture is a central issue in health care to knowing how to enact this understanding within their own professional domain.