

Supplementary material

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Appendix 1: Online preparatory questionnaire

Preparatory questionnaire for the interview

The following questions focus on your experiences with your entry-level physiotherapy (PT) training and its role in preparing you to provide optimal work rehabilitation care for patients with work disabilities. By answering these questions, you will familiarize yourself with key PT work rehabilitation competencies and reflect on your training in preparation for the interview.

DISCLAIMER: We're not using these questions to evaluate your competency; we're just curious about your perceptions. We understand that shortcomings in your training do not necessarily translate to your abilities as a clinician. These findings will be used to improve your program; your honest feedback is important. Published findings won't identify schools or specific individuals. Furthermore, your feedback won't be used to publicly criticize your alma mater.

Important definitions:

Work rehabilitation: Rehabilitation interventions (assessment and treatment) provided to an injured worker aimed at maintaining or restoring work participation, which include work ability, staying at work and return to work

PT program/training: The university training in PT that allowed you to obtain your license to practice as a PT in Quebec. Your PT program includes aspects that were common to everyone (compulsory course) as well as aspects that may have been unique to you (a particular stage/clinical rotation experience). Common aspects of the curriculum are the focus here; please feel free to touch on other experiences but make this explicit when doing so.

- When relevant and possible, please distinguish between common educational opportunities (e.g., classroom learning) and individual educational experiences (e.g., clinical rotations). Please specify in your answer if discussing a training experience outside of your PT program.

1. Contact information

Please provide your full name:

Please provide your preferred contact information:

2. Your perception about how your program prepared you to manage injured workers

Our research team has developed specific physiotherapy work rehabilitation competencies. They were developed following a review of the scientific literature, feedback from people with lived experience and consensus among researchers. Please note that these formulations were chosen because they were deemed acceptable by injured workers, who played an active role in their development. You can consult the competencies by clicking on the following link (insert link within survey).

For this section, we want to know **how well you feel** your entry-level PT program helped you develop each work rehabilitation competency. For example, are there any specific competencies that you feel were either particularly well developed or underdeveloped during your PT training? If so, **can you specify what helped** (e.g., knowledge and skills acquired, learning activities that you found helpful, organizational aspects of the curriculum).

For the following questions, please keep in mind that we are focusing on your level of competency **immediately after** completing your initial PT program and not your current level of competency.

2.1 Competency 1: To what extent do you feel your entry-level PT program prepared you to meet entry-to-practice levels to **“use a person-centered approach that fosters trust and supports the worker’s autonomy”?**

Not at all prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Slightly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Mostly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Fully prepared to meet entry-to-practice level

2.2 Competency 2: To what extent do you feel your entry-level PT program prepared you to meet entry-to-practice levels to **“recognize and address psychosocial needs and barriers related to the person’s work ability”?**

Not at all prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Slightly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Mostly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Fully prepared to meet entry-to-practice level

2.3 Competency 3: To what extent do you feel your entry-level PT program prepared you to meet entry-to-practice levels to **“partner with the worker in setting,**

progressing and adapting rehabilitation goals and interventions that reflect their perceptions, needs and values in relation to his work ability”?

Not at all prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Slightly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Mostly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Fully prepared to meet entry-to-practice level

2.4 Competency 4: To what extent do you feel your entry-level PT program prepared you to meet entry-to-practice levels to “**discuss job tasks and context with the person and assess their capacity for work”?**

Not at all prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Slightly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Mostly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Fully prepared to meet entry-to-practice level

2.5 Competency 5: To what extent do you feel your entry-level PT program prepared you to meet entry-to-practice levels to “**communicate and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to coordinate services and to meet the worker’s rehabilitation goals”?**

Not at all prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Slightly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Mostly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Fully prepared to meet entry-to-practice level

2.6 Competency 6: To what extent do you feel your entry-level PT program prepared you to meet entry-to-practice levels to “**support the worker in understanding and navigating relevant compensation systems”?**

Not at all prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Slightly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Mostly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Fully prepared to meet entry-to-practice level

2.7 Competency 7: To what extent do you feel your entry-level PT program prepared you to meet entry-to-practice levels to “**facilitate a safe, sustainable, and timely return to work in accordance with the perceptions, needs, and values of the worker**”?

Not at all prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Slightly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Mostly prepared to meet entry-to-practice level	Fully prepared to meet entry-to-practice level

Thank you for your time and valuable input! Your responses will help us prepare the focus group discussions. We look forward to exploring this important topic with you in greater detail!

Appendix 2: Interview guide

Important definitions:

1. **Work rehabilitation:** Rehabilitation interventions (assessment and treatment) provided to an injured worker aimed at maintaining or restoring work participation, which include work ability, staying at work and return to work.¹
2. **Work disability:** Presence of any physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment that significantly limits a person's ability to perform their job duties or participate fully in employment-related activities.¹
3. **Worker:** People with paid work, without distinction according to the type of employment contract (i.e., people without a contract of employment) and number of hours worked (i.e., partial or full-time).¹
4. **PT program:** The university training in physiotherapy that allowed you to obtain your license to practice as a PT in Quebec.
 - a. Your PT program includes aspects that were common to everyone here (compulsory course) as well as aspects that may have been unique to each of you (a particular stage/clinical rotation experience)
 - i. Common aspects of the curriculum are the focus here; please feel free to touch on other experiences but try to make this explicit when doing so.
 1. If discussing a training experience outside of your PT program (e.g., continued education, mentoring), please specify this.
 2. When relevant and possible, please distinguish between common educational opportunities (e.g., classroom learning) and individual educational experiences (e.g., clinical rotations)
5. **Work rehabilitation competencies:** These competencies were developed following a review of the scientific literature, feedback from people with lived experience and consensus among researchers. These competencies were included in the preparation documents and in the initial survey sent to you prior to this meeting. You can refer to them during the discussion.

¹ Luites et al. The Dutch Multidisciplinary Occupational Health Guideline to Enhance Work Participation Among Low Back Pain and Lumbosacral Radicular Syndrome Patients. DOI: 10.1007/s10926-021-09993-4

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Here are the 7 physiotherapist work rehabilitation competencies:

1. Use a person-centered approach that fosters trust and supports the worker's autonomy
2. Recognize and address psychosocial needs and barriers related to the person's work ability
3. Partner with the worker in setting, progressing and adapting rehabilitation goals and interventions that reflect their perceptions, needs and values in relation to his work ability
4. Discuss job tasks and context with the person and assess their capacity for work
5. Communicate and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to coordinate services and to meet the worker's rehabilitation goals
6. Support the worker in understanding and navigating relevant compensation systems.
7. Facilitate a safe, sustainable, and timely return to work in accordance with the perceptions, needs, and values of the worker.

Icebreaker:

- In your opinion, what should be the **role of the physiotherapist** in managing injured workers?
 - a. Which aspects of work rehabilitation, if any, fall outside the scope of practice of physiotherapists?

Please share your thoughts on **how your PT program prepared you** to manage patients with work-related disabilities. Please keep in mind that we are focusing on your **level of competency** to manage injured workers **immediately after** completing your initial PT program and not your current level of competency.

1. ***How well do you feel*** your physiotherapy program prepared you to manage injured workers covered by the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST)?
 - a. **Reflection on survey results: delve deeper into specific competencies based on the results of the preparatory questionnaire.**
 - b. How did your physiotherapy program prepare you to treat injured workers covered by the CNESST compared to those covered by other third-party payers?
 - i. Which aspects did you find more challenging and/or easier, and why?
 - c. Following your initial physiotherapy training, ***how confident did you feel*** in managing cases of injured workers covered by the CNESST compared to those covered by other third-party payers?
 - i. What specific skills or additional knowledge could have better prepared you to treat injured workers covered by the CNESST?
2. ***How well do you feel*** your physiotherapy program prepared you to collaborate with other healthcare professionals and/or stakeholders involved in the management of injured workers? And how?
 - a. With physiotherapy technologists and occupational therapists.
 - b. With physicians.
 - c. With rehabilitation counselors and claim/compensation agents.
 - d. With other healthcare professionals and stakeholders (e.g., psychologists, kinesiologists, employers, etc.).
 - e. To what extent did you feel confident working with these other healthcare professionals/stakeholders?
3. In your opinion, were there aspects of your physiotherapy program (e.g., lived experiences, academic content) that may have influenced your attitudes and beliefs toward injured workers? Positively and/or negatively.
 - a. In your opinion, where do these beliefs or attitudes come from (e.g., classmates, instructors, supervisors, the profession in general, etc.)?
4. What were the ***strengths*** in your physiotherapy training program that helped you feel more prepared to manage injured workers?
 - a. Which aspects of your training program helped the most?
 - i. Content-related? (e.g., knowledge or skills that you acquired)
 - ii. Learning strategy-related? (e.g., learning activities that you found helpful)

5. Which aspects of your PT training ***was missing (gaps in your training)*** that could have helped you provide better care to injured workers (e.g., a particular skill or knowledge, specific learning activity)?
6. You mentioned certain gaps. Have you taken any steps to address these gaps (e.g., continuing education, self-learning, mentorship, etc.)? If yes, what were they?
 - a. In what ways did these steps help you in managing injured workers?
 - b. Which gaps in your initial training were addressed by these steps?
7. Were there aspects of your PT training that you ***found less helpful, potential harmful or unproductive?*** Why?
8. What suggestions do you have to improve the PT training program to better prepare PTs to care for patients with work disability?
 - a. What could be added?
 - b. What could be done better?
 - c. What could be removed?

Concluding question:

9. Is there anything else that you would like to add that we haven't touched on?

Thank you for your time! We will share our findings with you to ensure that our interpretation and analysis are accurate and credible. Your feedback will be invaluable in this process.

Appendix 3: Positionality statement

Our multidisciplinary team combines professional and research expertise in work rehabilitation practice as well as lived experience of work disability. Most authors hold dual roles as researchers and educators, while others also work clinically with injured workers. Disciplines represented include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and psychology. Two members identify as people living with work disability, offering perspectives grounded in lived experience. These varied roles informed the questions asked and influenced interpretation of participant accounts. The interviewer had sporadic teaching engagements at one of the participating universities and may have previously taught some of the participants. This prior involvement was limited and did not include any formal supervisory or evaluative role.