

Identifying Priorities for Physiotherapy Research in the UK: The James Lind Alliance Physiotherapy Priority Setting Partnership

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For which topic were research priorities identified?

physiotherapy

In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

Europe - United Kingdom

Why was it conducted at all?

Physiotherapy, like all healthcare professions, needs to extend and update its evidence base to underpin clinical practice and demonstrate its role and value in contemporary healthcare.

What was the objective?

to identify unanswered questions for physiotherapy research and help set and prioritize the top 10 generic research priorities for the UK physiotherapy profession

What was the outcome?

a ranking list of 10 research questions

How long did the research prioritization take?

January 2017 - December 2017

Which methods were used to identify research priorities?

JLA method

How were the priorities for research identified exactly?

Step 1: setting up PSP: awareness meeting, identify steering group members and partner organizations, discussing scope. Step 2: collecting research questions: via literature review and survey, survey asked participants four question: What question(s) do you have about physiotherapy to help people recover and get back to their usual activities? What question(s) do you have about physiotherapy to help people manage their condition(s) themselves? What question(s) do you have about physiotherapy to help people to improve their health and prevent disease and injury? What question(s) do you have about how physiotherapy services are accessed and delivered?, 2091 uncertainties submitted. Step 3: data processing: submissions collated and refined, indicative questions created, indicative questions checked against evidence, resulting in 41 indicative questions. Step 4: interim ranking: via survey, participants were asked to rank questions, separate ranking scores from patient/carer and clinician groups weighted equally, resulting in list of top 25 uncertainties. Step 5: final prioritization: workshop: small group discussions with nominal group technique and small group rankings, aggregate rankings, plenary discussions

Which stakeholders took part?

Anyone with experience and/or an interest in UK physiotherapy: patients, carers, members of the public, physiotherapists, student physiotherapists, other healthcare professionals, researchers, educators, service providers, commissioners and policymakers. Survey: 510 participants (50% patients, carers or members of the public). Interim ranking: 636 participants: 490 (77%) physiotherapists working in clinical practice, patients (n=68 (10.7%)), carers (n=14 (2.2%)), members of the public (n=6 (1%)). Workshop: 30 participants: 15 physiotherapists, 12 patients and 3 carers.

How were stakeholders recruited?

Participants were recruited using convenience and purposive sampling in line with the JLA's inclusive approach. The partner organizations, steering group members and in the CSP promoted the survey through a range of advertisements to members in online and paper publications e.g. the professional magazine Frontline, social media, through professional and patient networks and in clinical settings. Interim demographic data about participants was provided to the Steering Committee in order to identify any groups that were felt to be under-represented.

Were stakeholders actively involved or did they just participate?

Stakeholders not only participated but were also actively involved in the research prioritization process: They were part of a steering group. The members were responsible for agreeing the initial scope of the project, publicising the PSP, overseeing the collection and analysis of the priorities, dissemination of results and taking the final priorities to research funders.