

REALLY GOOD STUFF

Exercise therapy education enriched through interprofessional teaching

Tak Wing Yu  | Ghaleelullah Achmat  | Luzaan Kock  | Gareth Smithdorf **Correspondence**

Tak Wing Yu, Physiotherapy, University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Bellville 7580, South Africa.

Email: tyu@uwc.ac.za

1 | WHAT PROBLEMS WERE ADDRESSED?

Biokineticist and physiotherapy professional scopes of practice are explicit that they are both exercise therapists, meaning that they use exercise as a treatment modality. Despite these well-defined scopes of the profession by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), there are examples of infringements where one profession is accused of conducting work supposedly the sole domain of the other.¹ This tension related to overlapping professional is present globally.¹ Role clarification is one of the interprofessional education (IPE) core competencies that define the responsibilities and appropriate role applications and optimises the scope of practice to effectively deliver patient care.

A lack of role clarification can result in conflict and, therefore, negatively impacts each profession's health services. The teaching of exercise therapy at a South African university was occurring in discipline-specific silos, contributing to the confusion of a physiotherapist and biokineticist in clinical practice. An IPE programme within the same faculty created health professionals opportunities to learn their respective practices in an integrated manner. Exposing the students to other scopes of practice which overlaps with their own allows students to understand and identify the similarities that could ultimately decrease the possibility of infringements on another profession's scope.

2 | WHAT WAS TRIED?

A workshop that aimed to develop a shared understanding of roles was presented by a Canadian athletic therapist specialising in sports therapy. Finally, physiotherapy and biokinetic students from the faculty were invited to attend. The workshop was conducted in three phases.

Phase one: A discussion of the scope of practice for biokineticists and physiotherapists was initiated and informed by the HPCSA

guidelines. This phase aimed to develop a shared understanding of the roles of each profession.

Phase two: The students were divided into interprofessional teams consisting of two participants each. The teams discussed how they would execute their different roles to meet the needs of the athlete.

Phase three: The workshop presenter demonstrated a range of hip joint ROM techniques and were required to discuss and critically reflect on which profession would be responsible for executing each technique. Once the roles were identified, students demonstrated and practised the technique that was appropriate to their profession.

3 | WHAT LESSONS WERE LEARNED?

This IPE activity provided an opportunity to clarify the different scopes of practice for biokineticists and physiotherapists. Positive, creative space for information sharing and improved professional understanding was created. The workshop's practical component developed students' ability to apply the appropriate techniques in the clinical context. During the discipline-specific reflection sessions, students indicated that the workshop was beneficial in understanding the roles of the two professions in the rehabilitation of a patient despite the overlap in scopes of practice. Based on this pilot project's positive outcomes, we recommend that shared-learning sessions be incorporated into both disciplines' professional programmes to explore team-based processes between disciplines further.

ORCIDTak Wing Yu  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9650-0370>Ghaleelullah Achmat  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1159-3804>Luzaan Kock  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1508-8186>Gareth Smithdorf  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4053-5689>

REFERENCE

1. Ellapen TJ, Paul Y, Swanepoel M, Strydom GL. Do biokineticists transgress on physiotherapists' scope of profession? Evidence-based analysis of two physical rehabilitation disciplines in South Africa. *African J Phys Act Health Sci (AJPHEs)*. 2018;24(3): 316-331.

How to cite this article: Yu TW, Achmat G, Kock L, Smithdorf G. Exercise therapy education enriched through interprofessional teaching. *Med Educ*. 2021;1-2. doi: 10.1111/medu.14619