

Physiotherapy for the Older Adults in Japan

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The International association of Physical Therapists working with Older People (IPTOP) is een officiële subgroep van het World Confederation of Physical Therapy (WCPT). President is dr. Hans Hobbelen.

De rubriek IPTOP geeft zicht op de internationale ontwikkelingen binnen ons vakgebied. In deze bijdrage schetst Shoichiro Nishikawa een beeld van het werk als geriatriefysiotherapie in Japan.

The Japanese Physical Therapy Association (JPTA), established in 1966, is one of the member countries of the World Physiotherapy (formally known as World Confederation of Physical Therapy (WCPT)). The JPTA has a total of 123,138 registered physiotherapists, including 571 senior members over 65 years old. 10,271 of the registered physiotherapists are registered as certified specialized physiotherapists who have specialized in clinical skills. Prevention of frail elderly is one of these specializations. Furthermore, there are 1.480 registered as specialized physiotherapists who have explicit academic skills (see table 1). Japanese physiotherapists have no direct access. Medical insurance requires the referral of a doctor so a referral from registered medical doctor is required. The workplace of a Japanese physiotherapist can vary from hospital, outpatient clinic, day-care, in-home visits to special needs school.

The Japanese Society of Physical Therapy for Prevention (JSPTP), is a subgroup of the Japanese Physical Therapy Association and member of IPTOP. The num-

Specialist
Basic Physical Therapy Sciences
Neurology Physical Therapy
Orthopaedic Physical Therapy
Cardiovascular, pulmonary and metabolic Physical Therapy
Life support & Environmental adjustment Physical Therapy
Physical Therapy applying Physical Agents
Educational and Management Physical Therapy
Certificated physical therapist
Human basic sciences
Animal and cell sciences
Stroke and brain injury
Neuromuscular disorders
Spinal cord injury
Developmental disabilities
Orthopedic disorders
Amputation
Sports Physical Therapy
Manipulative Physical Therapy
Cardiovascular disease
Pulmonary disease
Metabolic disease
Community based physical therapy
Health promotion and participation
Prevention for frail elderly
Prosthetics and Orthotics and Technical Aids
Physical agents
Wound Care
Pain
Clinical education
Management
Education for physical therapist

Table 1: Specialist & Certificated physical therapist

ber of JSPTP members are estimated around 12,696 and is one of the largest subgroups.

Japan is a super-aged society

In the recent years, the activities of physiotherapists have drawn the attention for the problems of long-term care and social security costs for an aging society. Since 2019, 28.1% of Japan's total population is 65 years or older. Categorized by gender, 25.1% are men and 31.0% are women and categorized 65 years of older. The population 70 years and above is 20.7%.

The aging of the population in combination with a declining population have become a major concern for the future of Japan's economy and society, especially

in relation to its impact on the public sector centered on economic growth and the social security system. The declining birthrate and aging population are phenomena that are common to more countries due to the improvement of income levels due to economic growth, advances in medical technology, and changes in people's values, and are therefore not limited only to Japan. However, the declining birthrate and aging population in Japan is advancing much faster than in other developed countries, and is resulting in various problems. For these social problems, JSPTP has defined preventive physiotherapy as follows.

"It is an academic discipline that studies physical activity, including prevention of the onset and recurrence of diseases that may cause disabilities and senile syndrome, so that the public can continue to "participate ". Research includes elucidation of mechanisms, prediction of outbreaks, development of preventive methods, development of equipment, creation of social activities and institutional planning."

Current situation in Japan for COVID-19

Based on the lessons learned from the new coronavirus infection, physiotherapists are performing outpatient visits, face-to-face or non-face-to-face visits and are building a preventive physiotherapy system that can flexibly respond to the situation.

In Japan, the first state of emergency was issued on 7th April 2020, which had the impact of dealing with infections in the majority of the medical and long-term care industries where physiotherapists work, and it also result that training at training schools were canceled. In October 2020, about 96,000 people were infected with COVID-19 in Japan.

The impact on physiotherapists was high because in the medical field, hospitalization were restricted, the outpatient treatment was reduced or stopped, patients were refrained from seeing other patients and inpatients were prohibited from visiting. The self-restraint to avoid contact with others had a great influence on the patient and their family. In outpatient services, physical and cognitive status declined and activities of daily living (ADL) restrictions progressed. The use of visiting service institutions has decreased as well as outpatient services as they fear that some patients or their families would be infected through visiting staff. Depending on the spread of the infection, you should choose between hospital visits and

visits, but in Japan both outpatients and visits are not allowed due to insurance system restrictions.

As a result, as system is built for patients, users, and local residents to continue medical, long-term care, and administrative services and receive a preventive physical therapy system even under conditions such as infectious diseases. In addition, in the process of implementing this system, a new place for physical therapists to play an active role will be created, increasing the added value in medical insurance, long-term care insurance, and non-insurance services, and recognizing it as one core in the comprehensive community care system. Doing this may expand the profession of the physiotherapist.

Holding an online congress

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, it was decided to hold the Japanese Physical Therapy Association congress online instead of face-to-face. The number of participants in the conference was 1,300, and the event was a great success. Also poster presentations were posted and presented online which resulted in sharing expertise and expand learning from each other. The online conference allowed us to continue developing rehabilitation technology for the elderly during this COVID-19 pandemic.



Online congress in Takasaki University of Health and Welfare