

## Developing a tool for success factors in physical therapy clinical studies - Expert validation and the student's perception

Hammam Atrash MScPT<sup>1,2</sup>, Michal Katz-Leurer PT, MPH, PhD<sup>2</sup>, Gila Shahr PT, MA, PhD<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Horowitz Physiotherapy Clinic, Clalit Health Services, Tel Aviv

<sup>2</sup> Department of Physical Therapy, School of Health Professions Sackler Faculty of Medicine, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv Israel

### Abstract

**Introduction:** Many factors contribute to the success of physical therapy clinical studies. A literature review found no validated tool that summarizes the varied success factors.

**Objective:** The primary objective was to construct a tool that combines factors contributing to enhanced achievements in physical therapy clinical studies, and to obtain expert validation for this tool. The secondary objective was to describe the contribution of the identified factors to success in physical therapy clinical studies programs, according to students' perceptions.

**Methods:** A total of 15 physical therapist experts, who are clinical studies coordinators in the clinical field or academia, participated in this study and were asked to answer the question: "What are the causes of enhanced achievements in physical therapy clinical studies?". The research was carried out using the Delphi technique, a process of expert opinions, in which participants think alone and decide together in a repeated circular process until a consensus is reached. For the secondary purpose, 50 physical therapy students in the last week of their clinical studies program were contacted via telephone and asked to participate in a telephone survey. The

students were asked to rate, on a scale of 0 to 10, each factor contributing to their success in the clinical studies program.

**Results:** Out of 68 success factors raised in the first round of the Delphi process, nine factors remained after the third round. Four of these nine factors were related to the clinical educator's characteristics. Another set of four factors was related to the student's characteristics, and the last factor was related to learning environment characteristics. According to the experts, the primary contributing factor is "student motivation." According to the questioned students, all of these factors are important to their success. The following factors - "Willingness to receive feedback from the clinical educator", and "A clinical educator who is a personal example when it comes to behavior, ethics, and respect for patients and colleagues" - were identified by them as the most important contributing factors for success in their clinical training program.

**Conclusion and recommendations:** In this study, a success factors tool was constructed, which includes nine factors that can contribute to the success of physical therapy clinical studies. The factors identified revolve around the clinical educator's characteristics, the student's characteristics, and the learning environment. In a follow-up study, we would like to examine the contribution of using this success factors tool in preparing students before starting a clinical training program.

**Keywords:** physical therapy, clinical studies, clinical education, achievements, success factors