



Cardiorespiratory physiotherapy as a career choice in Portugal

Ana Machado, Ana Oliveira, Cristina Jácome, Joana Cruz, Tânia Pinho, Dina Brooks, Alda Sofia Pires de Dias Marques
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Abstract

Cardiorespiratory diseases are a major cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide; thus, it is crucial to involve trained physiotherapists in the prevention and management of these diseases. This study assessed the factors influencing physiotherapists to choose or not a career in the area of cardiorespiratory physiotherapy (CP).

The link to an online survey was sent via e-mail by the Physiotherapists Portuguese Association to physiotherapists. The survey (11 items) assessed physiotherapists' career preferences, working area and factors influencing their decisions. Most questions were closed or categorical, with five point Likert scale, but offered participants an opportunity to comment openly where appropriate.

From the 375 participants (22% male; 31±8y), 22% stated that the CP was their preferred area. From these, only 15% were working in CP, being mainly influenced by their interest for CP (44%) and the opportunity to work with acute patients (24%). Physiotherapists not working in CP were working in musculoskeletal (41%), as generalists (21%), in neurology (14%) or in other areas (9%), such as geriatrics or paediatrics. These physiotherapists were mainly influenced by the lack of qualified courses for CP (16%), their belief of narrow application of CP (12%) and other factors (28%), such as reduced job availability and being a little explored area.

CP is an area with low interest for physiotherapists, mostly due to modifiable factors (i.e., job availability and qualified courses). These important results can guide the development of strategies to enhance CP attractiveness for physiotherapists.