Are physiotherapists walking the walk? : a global survey of physiotherapists' physical activity levels

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Introduction
Physical inactivity is a leading risk factor for morbidity and mortality worldwide. Physical activity (PA) counselling by healthcare professionals has been shown to be effective in increasing PA levels and increasing years lived free from disease. There is compelling evidence that the PA habits of healthcare professionals influence the amount that they promote PA in clinical practice.

Exploring Physiotherapists’ own PA habits will help us understand this important factor that influences PA promotion in clinical practice. The aim of the study was to record the PA levels of a global sample of Physiotherapists.

Participants
Data was collected opportunistically from participants of a global, online physiotherapy and physical activity course #PEPA MOOC.

Methods
A validated, single-item question was used to assess the number of days on which respondents had been active for at least 30 minutes in the last week.

Results
There were 2498 responses from 120 countries. The mean number of days on which respondents had been sufficiently active in the previous week was 3.

Discussion & Conclusions
There are limitations to using a single-item, self-report tool. These preliminary findings suggest that the PA habits of Physiotherapists around the globe may be surprisingly low and that many Physiotherapists may not meet PA guidelines.

Implications
This may be an important issue to explore further in order to increase PA promotion in clinical practice. There may also be important implications for the health and wellbeing of the physiotherapy workforce.

References
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