

**CSP2023: 486 - Scoping the role of Physiotherapy within HMP Establishments - a student led service improvement project [abstract only]**

CORSCADEN, Tess, MILTON, Frankie and BATTY, Helen

Available from Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<https://shura.shu.ac.uk/35257/>

---

This document is the Accepted Version [AM]

**Citation:**

CORSCADEN, Tess, MILTON, Frankie and BATTY, Helen (2024). CSP2023: 486 - Scoping the role of Physiotherapy within HMP Establishments - a student led service improvement project [abstract only]. Physiotherapy, 123 (Supp 1), e253-e253. [Article]

---

**Copyright and re-use policy**

See <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html>

**Title: Scoping the role of Physiotherapy within HMP Establishments - a student led service improvement project**

## **Purpose**

A social justice healthcare provider in the North West of England delivers healthcare services to 18 prisons. The World Health Organisation (2014) states prisoners are entitled to the same right to healthcare as those in the community yet within the organisation only 1 physiotherapist is employed. A high proportion of prisoners are from low socioeconomic backgrounds with the population having a high prevalence of long term health conditions and mental health problems (Thomas et al, 2016). Limitations within the prison environment provide added complexity. A student-led service improvement project was conducted to scope the role of physiotherapy within the service, create patient resources and make research informed recommendations.

## **Methods**

A review of the literature was undertaken. Onsite visits to prisons were conducted to scope the physiotherapy services and facilities; a gap analysis was completed. Semi structured interviews took place with prison healthcare staff, prison officers and patients. Current healthcare services were explored. The information and emerging themes were analysed, with prevalence of health conditions within the population reviewed.

## **Results**

A review of the evidence suggested that poor socioeconomic backgrounds are a predictor of increased healthcare needs. The World Health Organisation (2022) reports low socioeconomic status is a known predictor of poor cardiovascular health, often related to unhealthy lifestyles during incarceration.

The most prevalent health conditions identified were low back pain, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and cardiovascular disease (CVD).

According to Public Health England (2013) patients from secure environments have increased risk factors for persistent pain including mental health, substance abuse and experiences of previous trauma with anxiety in prison.

Evidence suggests the effectiveness of physiotherapy for COPD, CVD, low back pain and pain management, and the benefit of physiotherapy services such as pulmonary rehabilitation.

Semi- structured interviews with healthcare staff revealed a lack of knowledge of a physiotherapists' role, the benefits of conservative management for MSK conditions, the

increased need for healthcare, and patients' reliance on costly pain relieving medication.

Key themes from interviews with patients were a lack of resources, education around self management and how to use healthcare services effectively.

There were no exercise and self management information leaflets available to patients in the prison environment and a lack of healthcare services overall.

## **Conclusions**

Healthcare within prison establishments is not provided to the same level as within NHS environments.

Recommendations were:

1. An increased number of physiotherapists within the HMP establishments.
2. Exercise resources and self help information tailored to individuals.
3. Education of healthcare staff on the use of holistic and conservative management for long term conditions.

## **Impact**

This project highlighted the importance of physiotherapy within HMP establishments. Providing holistic and person-centred care and education on self management of long term conditions improves symptom resolution for the incarcerated population. Providing improved healthcare for patients, will reduce costs and burden on healthcare in the justice system and the NHS.

Increasing the number of physiotherapists in HMP establishments is recommended.

This project was student-led by BSc Physiotherapy students on a leadership placement highlighting the value of practice-based learning across the four pillars of practice.