

MAPPING ENGAGEMENT WITH PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS IN SUPPORT OF NEUROLOGICAL PHYSIOTHERAPY PRACTICE

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BACKGROUND

The resources physiotherapists need to pursue continuing professional development activity e.g. finance, time, peer support, are under pressure in austerity-hit healthcare economies globally. Professional and other networks, increasingly working digitally, fulfill an important role, but information-overload is a common complaint in an information-rich/time-poor world.

AIMS

Can a framework to map our individual engagement with professional and other networks help to prioritise information from key networks at specific times in our professional careers?

METHODS

APPDE and INPA collaborated at a 17th WCPT Congress (Singapore) seminar on the role of professional networks to support neurological physiotherapy. Session facilitators (poster authors) iteratively and collaboratively developed and piloted a 'network mapping grid' to capture, share and compare their own engagement in professional and other networks in support of their varied spheres of work (clinical, managerial, education, research).

Key dimensions and foci of network mapping grid –
GEOGRAPHICAL (G) local/regional (L/R), national (N), international (I)(or combination)
DISCIPLINE (D U/M) uni-disciplinary, *multi-disciplinary*
POLICY & CONTEXT (P&C) how health and social care services are organised and delivered
NEUROLOGICAL CONDITION (NC) neuro conditions generally (NCG), specific neuro condition (NCS)
EDUCATION & RESEARCH (E&R) at different levels

D U/M	G L/R	N	I
P&C	CSP English Network	CSP Twitter (following)	Twitter (following)
NCG	CSP ACPIN CSP AGILE	CSP ACPIN CSP AGILE	IPTOP INPA MDS
NCS	Parkinson's UK Branch MS Centre	Parkinson's UK Excellence Network	APPDE
E&R	Local University		

RESULTS

Educator and researcher (DJ) shared many networks with clinician (BR grid above) from the same country; DJ had an increased emphasis on networks facilitating access to research outputs. Grids of clinicians from different countries (BR & MG) underlined their clinical focus and links to patient groups. Local/regional networking was less important in a small country with good transport links (MG). Social media networking platforms were particularly important for RH and MG given their leadership roles in international organisations.

CONCLUSIONS

Network mapping grids

- ✓ provide a tool for information capture about network interaction
- ✓ offer potential to collect evidence for the impact of engagement on professional activity and personal development
- ✓ could highlight intensity of engagement– face-to-face/virtual, casual link/leadership role
- ✓ illustrate that social networking platforms enable people to 'follow' individually crafted and timely network configurations matched to their specific professional interests, and provide opportunities to share key information widely and via 'followers'
- ✓ underline the important networking opportunities offered by patient organisations

With so many candidate networks on offer it is important to consider how, and to what, we pay attention when developing knowledge and skills about neurological physiotherapy.

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