

Pelvic Floor Examination and Assessment for Urinary Incontinence: ACPWH programme now endorsed by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

Introduction

During 2009, the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Women's Health (ACPWH) Pelvic Floor Examination and Assessment for Urinary Incontinence programme was one of the first post-qualifying physiotherapy programmes to be endorsed by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP). This followed a 14-month pilot exercise during which members of ACPWH developed the original 2-day taught workshop into a complete package of learning, working with CSP officers and other colleagues to test the new endorsement process.

The CSP has a valuable role to play in standard-setting, quality assurance and quality enhancement in the post-qualifying arena, and it was keen to work collaboratively with providers of learning opportunities to offer a Quality Mark that would become familiar to members.

The Association decided that achieving this Quality Mark would be of benefit to physiotherapists who wish to develop their knowledge and skills relating to the assessment of female urinary incontinence. Chartered Society of Physiotherapy endorsement of a post-qualifying programme applies specifically to the programme and not to the individual who participates in it. Therefore, endorsement does not imply that participants who complete it are competent to practice in that area; this remains a matter for their own professional judgement.

Although individual physiotherapists have flexibility in the type and structure of their continuing professional development (CPD) activities, the formal recognition of CPD as an essential element of Health Professions Council re-registration provides employers and other organizations with the opportunity to insist on professionally endorsed CPD programmes for their staff.

The main objective of the new and improved programme is to introduce essential and correct evidence-based information on pelvic floor examination and assessment of urinary incontinence for physiotherapists working with women who suffer from urinary incontinence/pelvic floor dysfunction.

Learning outcomes

On completion of the programme, the participants should be:

- able to adequately assess a patient with urinary incontinence/pelvic floor dysfunction;
- able to formulate an effective management plan;
- aware of appropriate treatment modalities; and
- aware of and conform to the CSP Core Standards of Physiotherapy Practice (CSP 2005) in relation to the assessment and management of women with urinary incontinence/pelvic floor dysfunction.

Programme requirements

In order to complete the programme, participants must:

- provide evidence of the equivalent of 12 h study prior to the 2-day workshop;
- attend the 2-day ACPWH Pelvic Floor Examination and Assessment for Urinary Incontinence workshop; and
- submit an appropriate reflective, evidence-based piece of work (of 1500 words \pm 10%) to demonstrate the integration of their learning into practice.

Participants are supported throughout the programme. The 12-h block of study that is completed prior to attendance at the taught workshop is directed by a series of learning tasks. Information about the tasks, key references and resources are provided in a pre-workshop learning pack that is e-mailed to programme participants. This ensures that the best use can be made of the tutor time during the 2-day taught workshop and optimizes worthwhile learning.

The original 2-day taught workshop has been updated. It now includes more interactive sessions using clinical scenarios as well as the use of a competency checklist during the practical vaginal examination session.

Following the workshop, participants have access to the tutors for further support. They are

also required to complete a written submission that should demonstrate by reflection that they have achieved the learning outcomes listed above. There is a 3-month timescale for submission of this piece of work, which is anonymized and then marked by the workshop tutors.

The submission is written following the initial assessment of a patient with a urinary or urogynaecological problem. It should include a description of the subjective and objective assessment findings, the clinical reasoning relating to the clinical diagnosis and problem list, and the treatment plan. It should also include some information on other treatment options (in case the initial plan is not effective) since it does not follow the patient through their episode of care.

The papers in this edition of the *Journal* by Catherine Ross (pp. 13–16) Lorna Bayliss (pp. 17–20) were submitted by participants who completed the first CSP-endorsed programme in May 2009. These deviate from the usual style of *JACPWH* articles; however, the case reports

have also been amended from the format required for completion of the programme. The amendments include the addition of an abstract and keywords, as well as a more detailed introductory section. It is hoped that these will be a useful resource for future programme participants.

Further information on the ACPWH workshop programme is available from the workshop coordinator, Roberta Eales (e-mail: roberta.eales@btinternet.com).

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Reference

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) (2005) *Core Standards of Physiotherapy Practice*, 4th edn. Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, London.