

## Need to Foster Clinical Research Partnerships for Advance Physiotherapy Practice in Pakistan

Wajida Parveen 

Associate Professor & HOD DPT, Department of Physical Therapy, School of Allied Health Sciences, CMH Lahore Medical College & IOD (NUMS), Pakistan

Physiotherapy is one of the fastest-growing professions among health sciences disciplines in Pakistan, with the highest number of enrolled students in any Allied Health program. Since the evolution of the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from a four-year program to a five-year program under the command of the National Curriculum Revision Committee, HEC Pakistan, several new horizons have emerged for the profession, not only in Pakistan but globally<sup>1</sup>. Strengths of the program include an updated curriculum and inclusion of globally accepted courses, along with a special focus on research and innovation with the help of foreign-trained supervisors<sup>2</sup>. Physiotherapy is emerging as an autonomous and specialized healthcare profession in the country, and a large number of novice practitioners are opting for independent clinical setups<sup>3</sup>. DPT curriculum evaluated on the parameters of World Federation of Medical Education standards, still needs improvement in many aspects in terms of students' clinical and research skills and assessment<sup>4</sup>. Research is not only an integral part of graduate studies, but undergraduate students are also required to complete their projects for degree completion<sup>5</sup>.

Research is a vast paradigm and requires multiple resources ranging from skilled human resources, technological support, fiscal resources, and many others. For any organization or a particular research community, it is not possible to acquire all the resources at once, as some resources are immovable (people living at a particular place, weather and environmental conditions of a particular land zone, etc). The ultimate solution is to share the resources in the form of collaborations<sup>6</sup>. Collaborations are mutually acceptable sets of commitments for the greater interest of the respective organizations to achieve common objectives. Collaborations help to overcome the barriers and limitations in research and provide favorable outcomes in cost cost-effective and wider perspective. To enhance Physical Therapy evidence-based practice, in Pakistan, there is a need to foster clinical research partnerships. The identification of clinical partnerships is the first and foremost step for clinical research. Securing resources and funding is another crucial step in enhancing the research-based practice of the clinical community. Public policy funding should recognize and identify resources that assist in successful collaborative research, such as funding system intermediary roles, or supporting professional development for researchers to gain necessary skills in collaborative research<sup>6</sup>.

Enhanced clinical research collaborations can significantly improve the quality of Physical Therapy Practice. The guiding principles for best physical therapy practice in Geriatrics by the American Physical Therapy Association are one of the key examples of research-based enhanced clinical practice<sup>7</sup>. In Iran, the development of the musculoskeletal physical therapy registry is another example of the use of research in enhanced physical Therapy Practice<sup>8</sup>. In addition to that, the outcomes of an innovative rehabilitation clinic can be used as a role model to develop clinical partnerships and achieve excellence in advancing physiotherapy clinical practice<sup>9</sup>.

**\*Corresponding Author:** Dr. Wajida Parveen

**Email:** [wajida\\_perveen@cmhlahore.edu.pk](mailto:wajida_perveen@cmhlahore.edu.pk)

**Citation:** Parveen W. Need to Foster Clinical Research Partnerships for Advance Physiotherapy Practice in Pakistan. Pakistan Journal of Rehabilitation. 2025 Jul 07; 14 (2):001–3. <https://doi.org/10.36283/pjr.zu.14.1/001>.

**Received:** Wed, Feb 12, 2025

**Accepted:** Wed, Jun 30, 2025

**Published:** Mon, July 7, 2025

Over the past five years, several postgraduate programs have been introduced in Pakistan across various specialties, leading to a surge in research culture and research output. A growing number of studies, including systematic reviews and clinical trials, have been registered on prominent clinical trial registries, particularly Iranian and American platforms. Examining the recruitment sites for clinical trial participants in these studies reveals a significant number of setups involved in clinical research. These collaborations and partnerships will play a vital role in the flourishing of the research culture in the Physical Therapy profession across Pakistan. The findings from these studies will lead to improvements in advancing physical therapy clinical practices across the country. As per world physiotherapy guidelines, Advanced Physical Therapy Practice (APP) is clinically and economically effective because it delivers a desirable experience and improved outcomes for patients and clients<sup>10</sup>.

The need to foster clinical research partnerships for advanced physical therapy practice in Pakistan is undeniable. The physical therapy profession has been expanding its scope of practice, emphasizing professional autonomy and evidence-based practice over the last four decades. The need for clinical research is inevitable as it promotes effective communication, establishes partnerships, and offers equal opportunities among team members. In the current scenario of Pakistan, where healthcare challenges are escalating and the prevalence of non-communicable diseases is rising, collaborative approaches to research and clinical practice are crucial.

## REFERENCES

1. Mann S, Spiric J, Mitchell C, Hilgenkamp TIM. Development of a physical therapy-based exercise program for adults with Down syndrome. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2023 Feb 18;20(4):3667.
2. Al-Aayed KJ, Saraefi HA, Altalkani MS, Al-Azzawi AA. A SWOT analysis of the physiotherapy profession in Iraq. *Al-Zahraa J Health Med Sci*. 2023 Dec 30;1(4).
3. Owens JG, Rauzi MR, Kittelson A, Graber J, Bade MJ, Johnson J, et al. How new technology is improving physical therapy. *Curr Rev Musculoskelet Med*. 2020 Apr;13(2):200-11.
4. Rethorn ZD, Maxwell JL, Bezner JR, Davenport TE, Bradford EH, Ingman MS, et al. What are DPT program practices and attitudes related to population health, prevention, health promotion, and wellness? Results of a national survey. *Phys Ther*. 2021 Jan 4;101(1):pzaa178.
5. Souto-Miranda S, Brazete Cruz E, Pires D, Ribeiro F, Cordeiro N, Jácome C. Priorities in physical therapy research: a scoping review. *Braz J Phys Ther*. 2024 Nov-Dec;28(6):101135.
6. Price S, Van Dam L, Sim M, Andrews C, Gilbert J, Lackie K, et al. A longitudinal study of interprofessional education experiences among health professional graduates. *Adv Health Sci Educ Theory Pract*. 2025 Jun;30(3):735-54.
7. Criss MG, Wingood M, Staples WH, Southard V, Miller KL, Norris TL, et al. APTA geriatrics' guiding principles for best practices in geriatric physical therapy: an executive summary. *J Geriatr Phys Ther*. 2022;45(2):70-5.
8. Yazdipour AB, Ayyoubzadeh SM, Nazary-Moghadam S, Shahmoradi L, Kimiafar K. Development and evaluation of the musculoskeletal physical therapy registry in Iran: a step toward enhanced evidence-based practice. *BMC Musculoskelet Disord*. 2025;26(1):326.
9. Tao Q, Chao H, Fang D, Dou D. Progress in neurorehabilitation research and the support by the National Natural Science Foundation of China from 2010 to 2022. *Neural Regen Res*. 2024 Jan;19(1):226-32.

10. Ferreira RM, Martins PN, Pimenta N, Gonçalves RS. Measuring evidence-based practice in physical therapy: a mix-methods study. PeerJ. 2022;10:e12666.



© Pakistan Journal of Rehabilitation. This article is published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and source are properly cited. Creative Commons Attribution License ([CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/))