Fair SE (2005) The Fitness Self-Wellness of Physical Therapists. Dissertation.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to develop and assess the validity of the Physical Fitness Self-Wellness Survey and use it to assess the physical fitness self-wellness (that is, flexibility self-wellness, muscular fitness self-wellness, aerobic capacity self-wellness, and body composition self-wellness) of physical therapy (PT) members of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA).

A triangulation approach (involving content validity, response process validity, and construct validity) demonstrated that the survey is a valid instrument to assess the flexibility self-wellness, muscular fitness self-wellness, and aerobic capacity self-wellness, but not the body composition self-wellness, of the PT members of the APTA.

As determined by the survey, the majority of a random sample of PT members of the APTA was found to possess UNSATISFACTORY levels of flexibility self-wellness, muscular fitness self-wellness, aerobic capacity self-wellness, and physical fitness self-wellness. In these regards, the PT members of the APTA were SIMILAR to the TYPICAL U.S. American.

The results also suggested that a MINORITY of the subjects demonstrate a WORKING KNOWLEDGE of the concepts and terminology related to WELLNESS and physical fitness. For example, approximately one-third of the subjects were unable to confirm that they possessed an appropriate body composition or an unhealthy body composition (that is, were overfat or obese).

As physical therapists enhance patient outcomes by integrating wellness into clinical practice, are wellness role models, and have a professional goal to become the wellness practitioner of choice, physical therapists should possess a proficiency in wellness and exhibit a high level of personal wellness. Because PT emphasizes the physical fitness aspect of wellness, physical therapists should concentrate their efforts in this domain and strive to become the physical fitness wellness practitioners of choice.

To facilitate the wellness proficiency of future physical therapists, entry-level PT programs should require a dedicated course or courses in wellness. Practicing physical therapists may facilitate their wellness knowledge by completing continuing education seminars. Because there is little research regarding the relationship between PT and wellness, numerous issues warrant timely investigation.