

Dear colleague,

29/03/2016

My name is Anna and I am an MSc studying Neuromusculoskeletal Physiotherapy at the University of Brighton and I am currently recruiting for my dissertation with the title

**Clinical Reasoning For Core Stability Training in Non-specific Chronic Lower Back Pain (NCLBP): A Delphi Survey of Expert International Musculoskeletal Physiotherapists.**

I contacted your National Physiotherapy Association about an expert MSK physiotherapist to take part in my study. Physiotherapists, who have completed a postgraduate MSc degree and have at least 10 years of clinical experience will form the expert panel of the Delphi Study. Your name was put forward and I would like to invite you to take part in this study. The postgraduate study is crucial as the experts in this study ought to be familiar with evaluating research and forming an own educated opinion based on that whilst having had time to trial these things clinically. If you wish to participate, please take some time to read the following information carefully.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the most important factors in the clinical reasoning process for and against core strengthening in NCLBP amongst experienced MSK physiotherapists. As a participant of this study you would be involved in the analysis of the clinical reasoning for and against core strengthening in an informed discussion with other international expert MSK physiotherapists.

I am hoping to recruit subjects from countries such as Germany, Austria, Switzerland, England, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, China, Slovenia, Norway etc. with one physiotherapist per country and a total expert panel of about 15 international physiotherapists.

The study's design follows the Delphi-Method which is an iterative process of anonymous questionnaires. You will be asked to fill in three separate rounds of questionnaires using the survey monkey online. There will be one month between each round and I would appreciate if you could complete each round within two weeks.

In round one you will be asked 5 open questions to give you free scope to elaborate on the topic widely. This first round is crucial and determines the issues addressed in the subsequent rounds.

In the second round you will be asked to rate several statements taken from round one for agreement and importance. This will give you insight into the opinions of the other physiotherapists and state your agreement.

After further analysis, more statements will be fed back to you in the same format as in round two. The aim is to exchange the information from your colleagues and to give you the opportunity to adjust your answers if needed. This is called a consensus seeking process. The rate of consensus about the statements will be analyzed and will form the data set for my masters' dissertation. This will hopefully shed light on the implications and clinical reasoning for the use of core stability training in patients with NCLBP amongst expert international physiotherapists.

Data will be strictly anonymous and confidential and only used for this dissertation's purposes. The data will only be seen by myself and my supervisor and all identifying data will be discarded following my graduation. The levels of consensus from the final two rounds may be kept for further analysis and publication. If you wish to participate, I would kindly ask you to email me back saying that you wish to participate and that you are giving your informed consent for participation in this study. If there are any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the School Research Ethics and Governance Panel, School of Health Professions, University of Brighton.

Thank you very much, I appreciate your time and commitment. With your contribution we might be able to find consensus about the most important aspects of the decision process for or against core strengthening in patients with NCLBP used by expert international physiotherapists .

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions. If you have any complaints or concerns about the conduct of this research, then please contact my supervisor.

Kind regards,

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