

## EDITORIAL

# Journal of Clinical Education in Physical Therapy – the first year in review

One year ago, we launched the Journal of Clinical Education in Physical Therapy (*JCEPT*) with the twin aims of facilitating communication among all involved in physical therapy clinical education and developing educational scholarship related to clinical training. Since then we have leaned on our distinguished *JCEPT* editorial board, that represents a variety of clinical specialties and roles in physical therapy education, to continue to develop our website and the growing number of submitted manuscripts. In keeping with the mission, three papers have now been published: one perspective addresses the communication network among the many stakeholders in physical therapy clinical education and two studies examine the integration of simulation into physical therapy curricula.

Interest in incorporating simulation into physical therapy education has been increasing because of the challenges of providing a sufficient number of clinical education experiences as new programs develop and existing programs expand enrollment. Demonstrated student readiness for clinical education experiences is essential for faculty to ensure as demand from clinical affiliates for well-prepared Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) students grows. The impact on clinical education as the nation responds to and recovers from the COVID-19 crisis will be revealed as time progresses, but it seems likely that a variety of ways to prepare students for clinical readiness will be necessary. The use of mock patients to simulate clinical experiences is not new, as the use of our own bodies during laboratory experiences has long been a signature pedagogy of physical therapy education.<sup>1</sup> But one approach programs have increasingly used to help prepare students for clinical practice has been clinical simulation with standardized patients.

Standardized patients involve the use of ‘people who are well trained to portray a patient role’ in simulated experiences. The trained individuals simulate real life interactions in various clinical scenarios providing verisimilitude deemed by students to be more real than role play.<sup>2</sup> Incorporating standardized patient simulations may provide valuable practice that leads to student readiness for clinical placements and the standardization necessary for reliable assessment. Standardized simulation, however,

poses practical challenges for the institution such as the cost of space, equipment, and time. The literature in this area rarely includes estimates of costs and predominantly consists of uncontrolled studies.<sup>2</sup>

In this 2020 *JCEPT* issue, two papers present some of the challenges and solutions to integrating simulation into physical therapy curricula as well as studying simulation as an educational pedagogy. Simulation activities can be coordinated through a simulation center that includes separate suites representing different clinical settings or in a low-cost way that requires minimal space. For institutions that offer multiple educational programs under one roof, opportunities may exist for two-group comparison studies. Regardless of the method, simulation activities using standardized patients appear to help students’ self-identify gaps in their knowledge or ability.<sup>2</sup> Students may respond differently to an awareness of their own limitations, as seen in the studies, but reflection on the experience may well help develop clinical readiness in physical therapy education.<sup>3</sup>

We at *JCEPT* are excited to start the year with these first papers and continue to develop the other manuscripts currently in various stages of the publication pathway. *JCEPT* accepts original research, narrative and systematic reviews, innovative teaching methods or educational models relevant to clinical training, clinical education or clinical case reports, and exceptional critically appraised topics all of which can address any element of physical therapy education related to clinical practice.

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## References

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