

# Quantitative Evaluation of Physiotherapists' Perceptions on Cognitive and Mental Health in Rehabilitation: A Cross-Sectional Survey in Northern Italy

Francesca Morganti, Inaihá Laureano Benincá, Maria Gattuso, Stefania Butti

## Purpose:

To explore Italian physiotherapists' perceptions about their roles in managing cognitive and mental conditions in rehabilitation.

## Methods:

A quantitative study, in the form of an online cross-sectional survey. A standardized questionnaire was developed together with the Bergamo physiotherapy association and a team of psychologists and piloted with 10 physiotherapists. The questionnaire was structured in four sections with 21 items: 1) informed consent, 2) demographic information, 3) cognitive, and 4) mental health. Participants were physiotherapists who were members of the Italian National Physiotherapy Association (FNOFI). The link to the online survey was emailed through regional physiotherapy associations and social media. The frequencies and percentages of the responses were calculated. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the University of Bergamo, and consent was obtained from the participants prior to the conduct of the survey.

## Results:

Two hundred and forty-seven physiotherapists responded to the survey, with 242 providing written consent to participate. Participants had 17±10 years of professional experience, and the preferred sources of information were courses (80%), practical experience (76%), and guidelines (45%). Regarding the cognitive section, although 95% declared that motor rehabilitation has cognitive effects, only 50% affirmed that they have the knowledge to handle these patients, and 41% of primary doctors recommend considering it as part of the treatment. With regard to the mental health section, only 22% of physiotherapists declared that they had been informed about the role of physiotherapy in mental health during their formative education, and 25% affirmed that they have the knowledge to handle these patients. Lastly, 84% of participants had never received a patient referred solely for a psychological condition.

## Conclusion(s):

Based on these results, it is possible to observe that Italian physiotherapists reproduce the trend of limited ability to deal with this population, even though it is recommended in Italy's guidelines

## Implications:

In order to improve physiotherapy services and reduce burden on this population, it is important to understand the perceptions of physiotherapists, as well as those of healthcare professionals responsible for referring these patients. Raising awareness and providing targeted training to physiotherapists, besides encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, are crucial steps.

## Funding acknowledgements:

No funding was received for this work.

## Keywords:

Mental health  
Cognitive functioning  
Rehabilitation

## Primary topic:

Mental health

## Second topic:

Education: continuing professional development

## Did this work require ethics approval?:

Yes

## Name the institution and ethics committee that approved your work:

University of Bergamo, Ethics Committee of the University of Bergamo


## Provide the ethics approval number:

2024\_04\_02


## Has any of this material been/ due to be published or presented at another national or international conference prior to the World Physiotherapy Congress 2025?:

No


## Congress

 2025: Tokyo



## Code

 Printed poster presentation (PO-202)


## Type

 [Poster presentation](#)

## Topics

 [Mental health](#)  
 [Education: continuing professional development](#)

## People

 [Francesca Morganti](#)  [Maria Gattuso](#)  
 [Inaihá Laureano Benincá](#)  [Stefania Butti](#)

## DOI

 <https://doi.org/10.82161/p7eb-g064>