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Physiotherapy education and professional challenges in Cambodia

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Cambodia has one of the highest rates of road traffic injuries in Southeast Asia, and it replicates changing life styles coupled with increasing life expectancy (WHO in 2015, life expectancy in Cambodia). Consequently, persons in need of Physiotherapy (PT) are growing. However, the current PT workforce and a very low student's enrollment are not adequate for the Cambodian society which has only 465 qualified physiotherapists in 2017 for a population of over 15 million. In addition, the services delivery provided by the new PT workforce is not meeting the Quality Assurance Standards (QAS). In order to upgrade the PT skills, the Cambodian PT Association (CPTA) and the Technical School Medical Care (TSMC) are implementing a bridging program leading to a Bachelor degree with the Singapore International Foundation (SIF) support. Although, a widening mismatch between educational programs might prevent harmonization of the professional qualifications. Within this scope, an evaluation of the PT associated degree program was undertaken by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in cooperation with the CPTA. The evaluation was based on a qualitative approach including interviews and desk reviews. Initial conclusions were discussed in focus groups and face-to-face interviews with 70 key informants. The results show that learning outcomes related to the professional skills, reflective practice, clinical decision-making and evidence-based practice of the students are limited. The qualifications of the academic staff are not sufficient to develop students' critical thinking skills and the program delivery is based on 'teacher rather than student-centered approach'.

Biography

Seiha Suth has been a Physiotherapist in 2007 from Technical School for Medical Care (there is only one PT school in the country). He has been the Volunteer for the Association since 2013 and he is also the Manager of Cambodian Physical Therapy Association Clinic and Chairman of Physiotherapist Professional Development.

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