



DPT Student Self-Assessment of the Section on Geriatrics of the APTA Essential Competencies in the Care of Older Adults at the Completion of the Entry-level Physical Therapist Professional Program of Study

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BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The US population is aging due to increases in life expectancy and the aging of the baby boomer generation. The demand for health care professionals has never been as great as it is currently, resulting in an increased need for educated professionals in all health care fields including Physical Therapy(PT).

As a result of the Retooling for an Aging America report was the formation of the Partnership for Health in Aging (PHA) by the American Geriatrics Society. A Taskforce of the Section on Geriatrics, using the PHA document, identified specific statements that clarify the skills necessary for a PT to provide competent PT care to older adults. Final approval of the Essential Competencies in the Care of Older Adults at the Completion of the Entry-level Physical Therapist Professional Program of Study document was achieved in May 2011.

The geriatric content is a 3 credit lecture course taught by an actively practicing home health and hospice PT with 25 years of clinical experience, 12 years of academic teaching experience and a GCS since 1998. A majority of the students participated in at least 1 weekly hour long Seniorcise class given by DPT students at local senior apartment buildings.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to determine if the DPT students at a private university in the classes of 2012-2014 felt they met the Essential Competencies in the Care of Older Adults as developed by the Section on Geriatrics now called the Academy of Geriatrics of the APTA.

SUBJECTS

DPT students, N=114, classes of 2012-2014 after the completion of their degree requirements.

METHODS

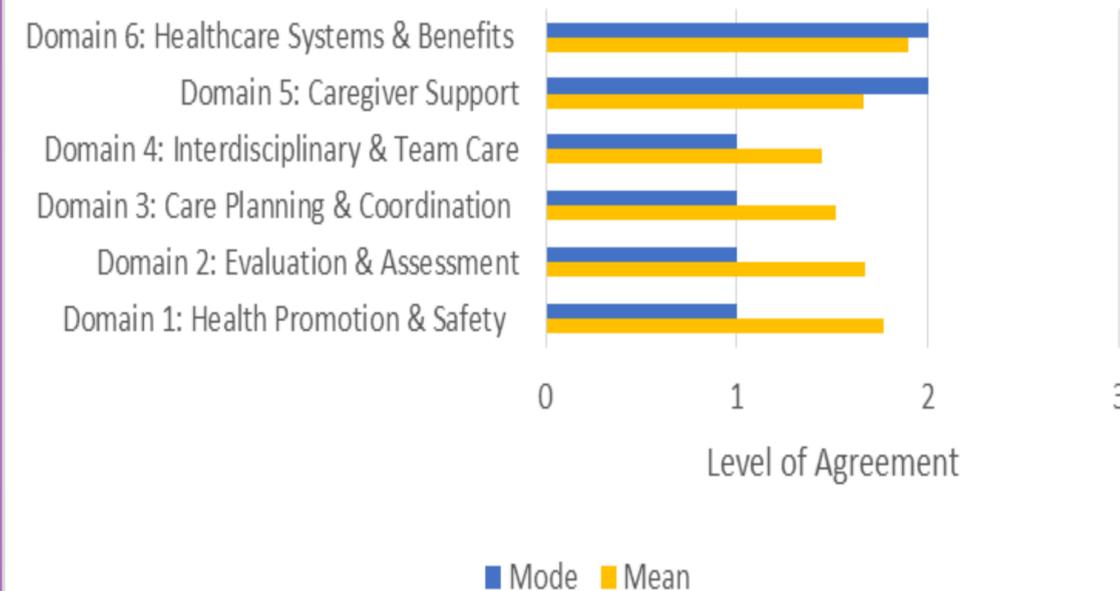
The DPT students were sent an e-mail with a link to an electronic survey which used a Likert scale developed by the researcher based on the Essential Competencies in the Care of Older Adults, the test-retest reliability was .66-1.00.

RESULTS

90 completed surveys, response rate of 79%.

- 80% had at least 2 of their 4 internships in a setting caring for older adults.
- 53% of the students had at least 3 of their 4 internships in a setting with the majority of the patient population being older adults.
- 14% of students had at least one CI that was a GCS.
- 46 % of the students had CIs with at least 6 years of professional experience.
- 36% had CIs with at least 6 years of experience caring for older adults.
- **Overall mean response for the Likert questions** was 1.73 with a mode of 1 (Strongly Agree)
- The lowest mean was 1.45 in Domain 4, Interdisciplinary and Team Care, mode 1.
- The highest mean was 1.9 in Domain 6, Healthcare Systems and Benefits, mode of 2 (Agree).
- **Significant relationships (p<.01)** were found between the CI's years of experience caring for older adults and providing information on: Medicare (r=.97), Medicaid (r=.96), VA services (r=.85), Sub-acute care (r=.82), nursing facilities (r=.81), social security (r=.81), assessing caregiver knowledge of disease risk and clinical experience of the CI (r=.80), CI's years of experience caring for older adults (r=.81) and clinical experience of the CI and providing information on social security (r=.82).

Likert Response Means and Modes Related to Self-Assessed Competency in the Care of Older Adults



CONCLUSION

The DPT students in the classes of 2012 to 2014 from a private university taught in a traditional lectured based format by an experienced and actively practicing GCS felt competent in the care of older adults. They felt the most confident with Interdisciplinary and Team Care and least confident in Healthcare Systems and Benefits. The CIs years of experience caring for older adults seemed to have had an effect on the confidence level of the DPT students caring for older adults upon their completion of their entry level DPT.