

SCPT Practice Guideline #1

Assessment and Analysis

Background

The physical therapist must conduct an assessment and analysis to determine the nature and extent of a client's dysfunction in order to determine the need for physical therapy service and/or referral to another health care provider.

The SCPT Code of Ethics provides:

7. Physical therapists shall not treat clients when the medical diagnosis or clinical condition indicates that the commencement or continuation of physical therapy is not warranted or is contraindicated.
8. Physical therapists shall request consultation with, or refer clients to, colleagues or members of other health professions when, in the opinion of the physical therapist, such action is in the best interest of the client.
9. Physical therapists shall document the client's history and relevant subjective information, the physical therapist's objective findings, clinical diagnosis, treatment plan and procedures, explanation to the client, progress notes and discharge summary.
16. Where a direct fee is charged, physical therapists shall inform clients, in advance, of the fee and shall ensure that the fee is commensurate with the service provided.

Practice Guidelines

Clinical Requirements

1. Prior to planning and delivering a physical therapy intervention or, in the case of a consultation, prior to reporting, the physical therapist:
 - (1) Documents a relevant health history or, in the case of a multidisciplinary assessment, reviews, and updates as necessary, the health history recorded by another team member;
 - (2) Incorporates supplementary information into the client's record relating to the client's health status, health history and previous health management having made a reasonable effort to obtain the information;
 - (3) Collects relevant data by interviewing the client and performing a clinical examination as determined by the nature of the presenting disease, impairment, and/or disability;

- (4) Identifies the client's and/or the family's goals for service and expected outcomes;
- (5) Where available and appropriate, uses standardized measures to:
 - a) assess the impact of the disease, impairment, and/or disability on the client's function;
 - b) establish baseline outcome measures;
 - c) assess the client's perceptions of his or her functional status and quality of life;
- (6) Analyzes assessment findings and determines client abilities, functional problems and potential for change; and
- (7) Records key observations, measurements and analysis in the client's chart.

Safety Requirements

2. The physical therapist:

- (1) Within the constraints of the practice setting, ensures services are provided in a clean, safe and accessible area;
- (2) Follows the SCPT practice guidelines relating to infection control procedures;
- (3) Exercises due caution near hazards in the physical environment;
- (4) Refers clients to:
 - a) another registered physical therapist for consultation when the assessment is beyond his or her competence;
 - b) another health care provider, when additional investigations are beyond a physical therapist's scope of practice;
- (5) Ensures tasks assigned to unlicensed personnel are appropriate and supervised in accordance with the SCPT practice guidelines relating to support workers and exercise therapists.

Interpersonal Requirements

3. Prior to commencing the assessment, the physical therapist:

- (1) Ensures the client and/or family are informed about the nature and purpose of the assessment, as well as any personal financial costs associated with the assessment; and

(2) Asks the client to report any significant change(s) in his or her physical status during the course of the assessment.

4. After completing the assessment, the physical therapist:

- a) informs the client and/or family about the results of the assessment;
- b) explains the nature of the problem and functional prognosis; and
- c) provides rationale for consultation with another health provider