



Press release

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New WCPT report advocates for PT involvement in disaster management

Physical therapists should be considered central to disaster management, and an intrinsic part of planning for and responding to events such as earthquakes and floods. That is the message of a major new WCPT publication.

The report points to the need for high quality rehabilitation after disasters. But it also emphasises that the role of physical therapists is not limited to direct provision of rehabilitation. It embraces preparedness and recovery and can include assessment, coordination, psycho-social support and advocacy.

The in-depth report was informed by a project advisory group including representatives from the International Committee of the Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières, CBM International and WCPT member organisations in Japan and the Philippines.

“It is a very timely document, and will be a great resource for physical therapists, in particular those involved in the disaster continuum as well as student education,” said WCPT Vice President Margot Skinner, who was a member of the project advisory group.

WCPT’s Professional Policy Consultant Catherine Sykes co-authored the report with Pete Skelton, a London-based physiotherapist and Rehabilitation Project Manager with Handicap International who has worked as part of emergency responses in Nepal, Gaza, Iraq, the Philippines, Libya, Jordan and Haiti.

“Disasters are a growing global problem,” said Pete Skelton, a physiotherapist working for Handicap International, who co-authored the report. “This guide provides critical information to those interested in national or international disaster response, introducing key international guidance and evidence. Critically, it is also designed to help physical therapists plan and prepare for disasters before they occur, and to support those who are re-building after a disaster has hit.”

The report, *The Role of Physical Therapists in Disaster Management*, is available for download at <http://bit.ly/1Mp4w12>.