

POSTER PRESENTATION PP25

Impostor Phenomenon among Physiotherapists: A Scoping Review

Candace Goh Xiao Huey^{1,2,3}, Vidya Acharya³, Kim Jackson³, Fatimah Ahmedy²

¹ Physiotherapy Unit, Sabah Women and Children Hospital, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

² Sabah Rehabilitation & Research Service Group, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

³ Physiopedia, London, United Kingdom.

ABSTRACT

Background and Objectives: The impostor phenomenon (IP) involves persistent self-doubt and feelings of professional inadequacy despite objective career success. Although widely recognised among healthcare professionals, dedicated research within physiotherapy remains sparse. This scoping review aimed to map out the primary contributing factors, associated professional challenges, and existing management strategies for IP within the physiotherapy community. **Methods:** Electronic database searches were conducted across MEDLINE, Scopus, and Google Scholar to identify relevant peer-reviewed articles published between June 2014 and June 2024. Peer-reviewed journal studies, online resources, and relevant conference proceedings specific to physiotherapy were also included. **Results:** The search yielded 121 records, with 19 articles included for final review. IP prevalence among physiotherapists was influenced by clinical experience, qualifications, transition periods, perfectionism, career stage, mental health history, work environment, age, stress, and gender. Associated challenges included reduced confidence, performance anxiety, burnout, and psychological distress. Effective management strategies included raising awareness, personalised Continuing Professional Development (CPD), Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), mentorship programs, and utilising online support networks like Physiopedia. **Conclusion:** This scoping review summarised that IP is a significant challenge for physiotherapists, particularly students and early-career professionals. Interventions like CPD, CBT, and mentorship show promise, while supportive workplace environments are essential. Further research is needed to assess the long-term impact of these interventions on professional confidence and well-being.

Keywords: Impostor phenomenon; physiotherapy; education; community platform; professional growth

Corresponding Author:

Candace Goh Xiao Huey

Email: candace@moh.gov.my