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A NATIONAL SURVEY OF SCHOOL-BASED PHYSICAL THERAPISTS AND
SECONDARY TRANSITION PRACTICES (153 pp.)

Director of Dissertation: Robert Flexer, Ph.D.

Researchers in the fields of physical therapy and special education transition have stated the need to explore how therapy programs impact the outcomes for transition-age students. Limited information exists to determine the level of involvement and role of physical therapists in secondary transition.

In what transition activities are physical therapists practicing with secondary students? What are the training needs of physical therapists in the area of transition practice? Is there a relationship between therapist characteristics and the therapist's involvement with transition-age students? What proportion of the variability in therapist involvement with transition age students is explained by the linear combination of predictor variables of therapist characteristics (educational background, experience in school-based practice, experience in transition practice, education in transition practices, administrative support of the therapist, and characteristics of programs in which therapists work)?

The population of 1,229 school-based therapists from a national database of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) was given the *Survey of School-Based Physical Therapists and Secondary Transition Practices* which was developed using Dillman's tailored design techniques. Four contacts were made and yielded an 86% return rate.

Internal consistency of the survey was determined using Chronbach's alpha. Descriptive statistics, frequencies, and percentages were analyzed to describe demographic information, identify the scope of practice for physical therapists in the transition process, and identify training needs. A forward regression analysis was performed with the model explaining 48.6% of the variance in therapist involvement with transition-age students.

Physical therapists working in secondary transition need to: (a) complete more comprehensive evaluations with students who have intensive support needs across a variety of future environments; and (b) expand collaborative service delivery beyond school environment to include a student's local community and provide interventions in the community to promote generalizability of skills. Administrative support and inservice training are the strongest predictors of therapist involvement with transition-age students. Education in physical therapy, years of experience in school-based practice, and school-based practice with secondary age students were weak predictors of therapist involvement with transition-age students.