

THE HOW AND WHY OF THE MOVEMENT SYSTEM AS THE IDENTITY OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

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ABSTRACT

The Movement System was adopted as the identity of physical therapy as one of the 8 guiding principles accompanying the Vision Statement of 2013. At its inception physical therapy was considered more of a technical field rather than that of a professional field. Physicians were to diagnose the patient's problem and the therapist was to follow the prescription provided by the physician with the primary purpose being to relieve symptoms such as pain or muscle weakness. Even by the 1960's, the prescription became more of a referral and there was recognition that therapists were making decisions about the patient's treatment and discharge disposition. The role of the physical therapist in pathokinesiologic problems has been well accepted over the years but as insights are gained about the role of movement in musculoskeletal pain, the concept of kinesio-pathologic problems is being defined. Whether the movement dysfunction is from a pathokinesiologic or a kinesio-pathologic mechanisms, the underlying physiologic process is movement which is the composite action of the movement system. This article provides a brief discussion of the steps leading to promotion of the identity and the reasons that further defining and promoting the movement system as the body system for which physical therapists are responsible is necessary for the full recognition of the profession. As suggested by the kinesio-pathologic concept of movement inducing pathology, physical therapists can address the cause of musculoskeletal problems and not just symptoms or consequences such as the pathoanatomic problem.

Level of Evidence: 5

Key words: Identity, movement system, pathokinesiologic, kinesio-pathologic

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