

Physical Therapy and its relationship with evidence

A Fisioterapia e sua relação com as evidências

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In Cartesianism, evidence relates to observations of truths about which there is no doubt. Reflection on its philosophical rubric demonstrates that this is a strong word, particularly when it is used in a professional context. Basing or grounding an approach on evidence is incontestably of great importance for good professional practice. This affirmative constitutes a widely discussed topic within formal and informal environments of Physical Therapy. By going to a congress or by talking to a colleague one finds out that the term “evidence-based physical therapy” is frequently mentioned.

I have taken up this subject again here, because I believe that Physical Therapy has not established an honest relationship with the evidence that is inherent to the development of the profession. Many physical therapists are exposed to veritable therapeutic fallacies masqueraded under the mantle of “evidence-based physical therapy”. In this respect, one good example is the *lato sensu* graduate courses within the field of Physical Therapy. Today, a physical therapist can become specialized in topics that indisputably present a large dose of empiricism, to the detriment of information based on the scientific method.

Trained scientists, those who have been capacitated to establish the methodological design for resolving a problem and consequently demonstrating its results, are being forgotten. The equilibrium between empiricism and scientific method has been left aside in our profession for a long time now. Consequently, the term “evidence-based physical therapy” would, at present, be well employed as a synonym for dichotomy and not for professional integration.

Physical Therapy will certainly not manage to attain high levels of credibility while the true evidence does not form part of our professional daily routines. For the time being, in practice, we are still living at the start of the 20th century, at the stage in which treatment with leeches represented the cure for all ills.

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