

What is Cardiovascular/Pulmonary Physical Therapy Research and Why Should We Care About it?

The December issue of the *Journal* is one that I always highly anticipate because the CSM 2010 research abstracts are published in this issue. The variety and quality of these abstracts truly excites me about our specialty. From mechanistic studies, we can learn how the body reacts to stimuli like exercise, stress, or nutritional status. We can learn how diseases affect the different cells, tissues, and organ systems of the body. The next step is to translate these findings into human studies. Experiments with participants who do not have cardiovascular or pulmonary diseases help us understand how a human reacts to these stimuli. We can also learn important things about disease prevention from this work. Applying findings in “healthy” people to what we see in our clinical populations is also a critical step in this research continuum. It is only in studying how people react in their own environments that we can use the research to improve function and quality of life for those we serve. Similarly, a well-described and systematically analyzed case report can form the basis of new studies.

I firmly believe that participation in research is vital for the students I teach for two reasons. One, it makes them appreciate the work that goes into the literature they are reading and critiquing. It is one thing to criticize a study for having a small sample size, and fully another to recognize how hard it was to recruit those 8 people for a 6-month training study! Secondly, participating in research helps to “demystify” the process. I hope my students leave school feeling like they could participate in research once they are full-time clinicians. This may be as a person who recruits participants, or performs data collection, but it may also be the person who creates the research ideas and leads the team.

For clinicians who are being pushed to generate more revenue, see more patients, and do more paperwork in their daily lives, the idea of participating in research may just feel impossible. However, I think the same two reasons (if not more) apply to clinicians as to entry-level students. I hope that exposure to the variety of scholarship present in our *Journal* (and others) might make this idea seem possible. I encourage you who are in this position to find a mentor or like-minded colleague and plunge into the process of discovery. All types of studies are important for our profession and specialty. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. No individual clinician or researcher is an expert in all types of studies. Thus, we depend on a pool of experts to help guide us. I know that is certainly the case for me. I lean heavily on my Associate Editors and Editorial Board. However, we cannot do our jobs without the talented and diverse cadre of reviewers who carefully examine each manuscript and provide clear and constructive comments to the authors. The names of all our reviewers in 2009 are printed below and I encourage you to thank them also. Their dedication to promoting cardiovascular and pulmonary research and developing researchers is unparalleled. I hope you find inspiration in the state of cardiovascular/pulmonary physical therapy research!

Anne K. Swisher PT, PhD, CCS
Editor-in -Chief

Cardiopulmonary Physical Therapy Journal thanks the following reviewers for their work in 2009:

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