



Statements to agenda items 14.2, 14.4 and 10 of the 72nd session of the WHO Regional Committee Meeting (RCM) for the Western Pacific by the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine

On Agenda Item 14.2: Non-communicable diseases (NCD) and Ageing

The Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020 recognized rehabilitation as a key health strategy to address NCD risk factors, as well as loss of function due to NCDs.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are the leading cause of death globally and disproportionately affects low-to-middle income countries which often have limited capacity for the prevention and control of NCDs. The standard evidence-based care for the long-term management of NCDs includes rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation comprises interventions which optimize functioning and reduce disability in individuals with health conditions in interaction with their environment. Rehabilitation can decrease the disabling effects of NCDs, reduce hospital length of stay and associated costs improve life participation and independence.

However, rehabilitation is under-prioritized, under-resourced, remains unaffordable and inaccessible for many people. The NCD monitoring framework focuses on mortality and morbidity, while neglecting functioning, which is essential to participation, quality of life, and reduced burden on health systems and formal and informal care networks.

Along with the International Spinal Cord Society, World Physiotherapy and the World Federation of Occupational Therapy we call on States to:

- Re-orient health decision-making to focus not only on mortality and morbidity, but also on functioning and quality of life. For this purpose, collect data on functional limitations and consequences among people living with NCDs.
- Develop guidelines for service provision and integrate rehabilitation at all levels of health systems, from primary health care to tertiary care, across the continuum of NCD care.
- Champion the WHA Resolution on Rehabilitation in 2022, which would provide the political framework for stronger commitments and wider coverage, increase rehabilitation financing, and enhance the WHO's Rehabilitation 2030 initiative.
- Incorporate rehabilitation in the care of the ageing population with its rise in NCDs and associated disabilities (to be highlighted in this year's International Rehabilitation week with the theme Rehabilitation for healthy ageing)

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On Agenda item 10 and 14.4 Covid-19 and Reaching the Unreached

COVID-19 can cause long-term health problems and symptoms that interfere with daily activities. In some cases, these can persist beyond 12 weeks, now referred to as post-COVID-19 conditions, long COVID, or post-COVID-19 syndrome.

Member states are being called on to:

- Incorporate Rehabilitation into post-COVID -19 care to improve function and prevent long-term disabilities
- Adopt telerehabilitation as a process to allow continuity of care for patients who can benefit from remote consultations, while ensuring greater protection for those who are members of vulnerable groups.

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