

# **Are Skills in Physical Medicine Acquired without Benefit of In-House (Hospital) Instruction Adequate for Competency Qualification?**

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In the opinion of this author, the answer is unquestionably no. The ultimate objective of educational goals in physical medicine is to treat people who possess some clinicopathology amenable to such treatment. It follows that such education and training must involve people. It also follows that to be sufficiently comprehensive in scope as to provide for a competent level of achievement in such a pursuit, the candidate undergoing such training must be exposed to a variety of clinical abnormalities which will provide them with a broad range of clinical problems that sharpen their diagnostic and therapeutic acumen.

To achieve such a goal, it is reasonable and necessary to conduct such an academic process in the most favorable setting available to provide for a system of training offering the most desirable atmosphere for this achievement. The level of skill provided in a setting less introspective than this is likely to result in individuals being inadequately prepared to serve the public. The result of allowing individuals trained didactically to care for the public could be considered a disingenuous approach to assuring them of competency.

It is not unreasonable for the public to expect the health care community to provide for the best educated, trained, and skilled individuals possible to care for them. Are our educational institutions practicing parsimonious economics to the extent that they are providing for less than adequate practitioners, especially in the field of physical medicine (physiatry)?

The chiropractic profession continues to use the inappropriate terms "physical therapy" and "adjunctive therapy" to describe this area of specialty. Physical therapy is applied by a physical therapist. Physiatry is the application of the agents of the physical sciences for therapeutic purposes and management by a physician trained specifically in this specialty. This is the case generically speaking, no matter which discipline the physician is a member of: allopathic medicine, osteopathic medicine, or chiropractic.

Concerning progress in education, training, and the acquisition of skills, Mr. Iococca said it well: "Lead, follow, or get out of the way."

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