

ABSTRACT

Questions of resource allocation, efficiency and fairness are important concerns in all aspects of the Canadian health care system, including rehabilitation departments and institutions. In physiotherapy departments, many factors influence decisions related to management of wait lists and choices regarding frequency and duration of treatment. These decisions and processes are associated with questions of fairness in priority setting and principles of procedural justice. Which criteria ought to be used to prioritize access to care? Should the needs of patients on wait lists influence decisions regarding frequency and duration of treatment for current patients? Should reimbursement by third-party payers influence access to services? How should chronic conditions be prioritized relative to more acute cases? A range of important ethical issues are associated with these questions.

In this project, we aim to develop and translate knowledge about equity of access to physiotherapy services. There are three components to this project. We will 1) conduct a scoping review of the existing literature on resource allocation and equity of access in rehabilitation and other domains of healthcare practice, 2) explore physiotherapists' experiences and perspectives through in-depth individual interviews, 3) develop and implement workshop activities for clinicians. This topic is important in view of the limited resources available in the healthcare system, the high number of patients on waiting lists for physiotherapy services, and the forecasted increase in need for rehabilitation services due to the aging of the population.