The Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice
A Peer Reviewed Publication of the College of Health Care Sciences at Nova Southeastern University
Dedicated to allied health professional practice and education
http://ijahsp.nova.edu Vol. 12 No. 4 ISSN 1540-580X

Review of: Fundamentals of the Physical Therapy Examination, by Stacie Fruth

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CITATION: Mount H. Review of: Fundamentals of the Physical Therapy Examination, by Stacie Fruth. *The Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice.* Oct 2014. Volume 12 Number 4.

INTRODUCTION

Stacie Fruth, PT, DSci, OCS, is a physical therapist who teaches in the School of Physical Therapy at the University of Indianapolis. She also has degrees in Kinesiology and Exercise Science. She developed this textbook for entry-level physical therapy students to learn the basic foundation of an initial examination. Fundamentals of the Physical Therapy Examination is organized into two major parts.

CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Physical Therapy Examination

An overview of the contents of the physical therapy examination and suggestions on how to utilize this textbook is provided in chapter 1.

Part One: The Patient Interview: Laying A Solid Foundation

Chapter 2: Cultivating a Therapeutic Partnership

This chapter describes not only the purpose of the interview, but also how the therapist prepares themselves and their environment for a successful interview. This includes discussion of physical appearance as well as recognizing personal bias and self-awareness. It introduces the importance of cultural competence and psychosocial aspects of patient care.

Chapter 3: Interviewing Techniques and Communication Tools

This chapter covers effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies such as summarizing, paraphrasing and body position. There are several helpful tables including interview practices to avoid, hand and body gestures to avoid, and positive and negative non-verbal behavior. The chapter would benefit from additional topics including time management and effective documentation strategies, areas where students often have difficulty.

Chapter 4: Conduct and Content of the Patient Interview

This chapter begins with an introduction to red and yellow flags that guide the direction of the interview. The remaining portion of the chapter describes the information gathered during an interview and common methods to obtain it. The companion website contains examples of two patient interviews for students to view. The author emphasizes the importance of an effective interview in the success of the remainder of the examination.

Part Two: Tests And Measures: Building On The Foundation

Chapter 5: Introduction to Physical Therapy Tests and Measures

A list of possible tests and measures are provided in Chapter 5 along with a brief overview of how to select the appropriate ones during an examination. Introduction to the Hypothesis Orientated Algorithm for Clinicians (HOAC) would be a helpful addition to

the text to guide students through the examination. Common problems students encounter during this process are outlined in table 5-1. In part two of the text, the author includes tables entitled priority or pointless that are meant to guide readers in choosing different procedures during the examination, however, there is no research substantiating the opinions in these sections.

Chapter 6: Global Observation, Mental Status, and Functional Assessment
An overview of cognitive deficits, functional impairments, communication disorders, and psychological and emotional dysfunction is presented. Tables include function and associated dysfunction of the brain by lobe/region, comparison of receptive and expressive aphasia, tests to assess aspects of cognitive function, and comparison of basic ADLS and instrumental ADLs. The text mentions common functional assessment measures, but no examples are provided.

Chapter 7: Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Examination
This chapter describes the method to perform common assessments such as vital signs, edema assessment, oxygen saturation, ankle brachial index, and the six-minute walk test. Detailed descriptions of the techniques are presented for students to practice. Videos are also available to assist with the techniques through the books online website.

Chapter 8: Integumentary Examination
Chapter 8 introduces screening the integrity of the skin. Topics introduced include wounds, burns, ulcers, sensory testing, inflammation, differentiating neuropathic and vascular ulcers, hair and nail assessment, and screening for malignancies. The chapter lacks discussion on important items to include in assessment and documentation of skin integrity. Videos depicting the Ankle-Brachial Index test and a sensory examination are found on the companion website.

Chapter 9: Musculoskeletal Examination
This chapter includes an overview of common musculoskeletal tests and measures. Topics include posture, gait, range of motion, muscle strength, deep tendon reflexes, dermatomes, myotomes, and palpation. A detailed description of posture and muscle length is included for student practice. Phases of gait, common aspects of gait to evaluate and common gait deviations are described. While the difference between active and passive range of motion and end feels are covered, goniometric measurement is not. The author describes estimation of ROM using percentage and descriptors. The text describes gross muscle strength testing and includes the numerical muscle grading system. Students will need to refer to another text to test individual muscles. The text does not include cutaneous nerve distribution, which would assist the student in structural differentiation.

Chapter 10: Neuromuscular Examination
An overview of common methods to assess nervous system integrity is provided in chapter 10. Students can use the text to practice sensory and cranial nerve testing. Examples of coordination tests include finger opposition, finger to nose, heel to shin, toe tapping, and rapid alternating movements. Balance tests include single limb stance, Romberg test, nudge test, functional reach, and basic activities to assess dynamic balance. Standardized measures of balance and mobility are mentioned but not described in detail. Muscle tone is introduced and basic assessment is described.

"Fundamentals of the Physical Therapy Examination" fills a gap for entry-level education of physical therapy students. Currently, no one textbook includes all of this content. The text introduces the basics of an examination and can serve as a foundation for future courses in specific content areas. The material is general enough that students in other professions would benefit from this text. It would be appropriate for interprofessional courses involving students who perform a basic examination. Although the content is simplified, it touches on important but often overlooked aspects of an examination including environment, body language, and therapist attitudes and attire. Much of the information is summarized in chart form, making it easy for students to reference in class and clinic. Pictures and diagrams provide a visual supplement to the material provided. All of the supplemental material is clear, well organized and assists the reader in understanding the major concepts. The appendix contains a list of abbreviations common to physical therapy documentation. In addition to the easy-to-read text, a companion website offers readers videos of sample interviews and examinations as well as many tests and measures described in the textbook (with an access code provided inside the text)

Readers should be aware that the textbook is a brief overview of these concepts and students will need to refer to other sources for more in depth coverage. Each chapter would benefit from a list of activities to practice, challenging questions, or incomplete case studies students can work through to enhance their learning. The author does provide case examples in each chapter along with documentation examples in SOAP format. There are no examples of standardized forms for data collection or suggestions

for time management and effective documentation during an examination. There is no mention of evidence-based practice and the research behind the skills described in the text.

Overall, this text is a good reference for new students or any allied health professional who performs basic patient examinations. It would be especially useful in early clinical affiliations or interdisciplinary courses focusing on the basic skills of assessment.