



Statement to the agenda item 5(g) “Accelerating primary health care in the WHO European Region: organizational and technological innovation in the context of the Declaration of Astana” of the 69th World Health Organization Regional Committee for Europe from 16–19 September 2019

The International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM), WCPT, IAPO, Studiorum, WHPCA, COTEC, WFOT, EUPHA, EAFD and EFPC celebrate the regional committee's approach to accelerate progress in primary health care in the European region. Especially the fact that rehabilitation is considered as a key strategy to achieve universal health coverage and the importance of assessing the special needs of persons with disabilities.

Rehabilitation as defined by WHO is a health strategy that aims to optimize functioning, reduce disability and ultimately contribute to well-being¹. Rehabilitation needs are increasing due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), chronicity, injuries, and ageing. Disability-adjusted life years lost to NCDs are growing; violent conflicts, natural disasters, and large population migrations, are re-shaping the global health landscape². Persons with disabilities have the greatest difficulty in accessing health services. Basic rehabilitation services, assistive technologies and long-term follow-up should be reachable for people experiencing disability but rehabilitation professionals in PHC are scarce in most countries.

We support the statement made on this agenda item report that “today's health and health system challenges require continued policy efforts to ensure system alignment so as to enable the expansion of coverage of quality services and financial protection for the strengthening of primary health care”³. We strongly believe that there is a growing need to know the patients' functioning problems and rehabilitation needs in primary health care in Europe, in addition to building the necessary strategies to respond adequately to these needs, considering the particularities of the provision of rehabilitation services,

1 Rehabilitation 2030 a call for action. Rehabilitation: key for health in the 21st century. <https://www.who.int/disabilities/care/KeyForHealth21stCentury.pdf?ua=1>

2 (Documents A72/12) Universal health coverage. Primary health care towards universal health coverage Report by the Director-General

3 69th session, Regional Committee for Europe. Accelerating primary health care in the WHO European Region: organizational and technological innovation in the context of the Declaration of Astana

which makes more difficult to apply some strategies, such as, redistribution of tasks, telehealth and telecare. Moreover, the rehabilitation approach illustrates clearly the need for a paradigm-shift in health care from a disease-oriented towards a 'goal-oriented' approach, aiming at the realization of the life-goals of the patient⁴.

⁴ De Maeseneer J, Boeckxstaens P. James Mackenzie Lecture 2011 Multi-morbidity, Goal-Oriented Care and Equity. Br J Gen Pract 2012;62:522-4