The use of standardised outcome measures for stroke rehabilitation by physiotherapists in Ghana

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Objective
Outcome measures are assessments that measure change in patients functioning, performance or participation over time. It is recommended that health care organisations develop a health system that facilitates record of standardised measurement data in clinical practice. This helps in measurement of patients’ perspectives, improve care delivery, increase transparency of outcomes and link clinicians’ performance to patient outcomes. It will also improve patient care and strengthen public health. The use of standardised outcome measures is an aspect of good clinical practice. However, literature suggests an inconsistent use of outcome measures in stroke rehabilitation by physiotherapists. The main objective of this study was to determine the extent of usage of outcome measures for stroke rehabilitation among physiotherapists in Ghana.

Methods
A descriptive cross-sectional survey was employed. A 35-item Google questionnaire was sent to 120 physiotherapists using email and Whatsapp contact of participants. Hardcopies were also sent to some physiotherapists in their facilities. A reminder was sent to them every week to prompt them to answer the questionnaire and sent via mail and or WhatsApp.

Results
Out of the 105 respondents, 72.4% used at least one outcome measure in the rehabilitation of stroke patients. Over half, 55 (52.4%) of the participants reported that there were no recommended outcome measures in their physiotherapy facilities for the rehabilitation of stroke patients. Majority, 31(29.5%) of PTs did not use any outcome measures for any of the stroke patients they managed, while 22 (21%) of used outcome measures to evaluate the progress of all the patients they saw, thus 5 out of 5 patients and 20 (19%) used the outcome measures 2 out of 5 of the patients they see.

Conclusion
Although majority of physiotherapists used outcome measures for stroke rehabilitation, the frequency of use was not encouraging. Outcome measures should be conceptualised and adapted for use by physiotherapists across work settings.