«ЕКОНОМІКО-СОЦІАЛЬНІ ВІДНОСИНИ В ГАЛУЗІ ФІЗИЧНОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ ТА СФЕРІ ОБСЛУГОВУВАННЯ»

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THE ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PHYSICAL THERAPY

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In today's increasingly interconnected world, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become an essential skill for healthcare professionals across all disciplines. For physical therapists working in Ukraine and around the world, English proficiency is no longer merely an advantage — it is a fundamental professional requirement. From reading the latest research publications to communicating with international patients and colleagues, English serves as the universal language of modern physical therapy practice.

One of the most significant reasons why English is indispensable in physical therapy is its central role in professional development and continuing education. The vast majority of research in rehabilitation science and evidence-based therapeutic practice is published in English-language journals. Without a solid command of English, Ukrainian physical therapists are unable to access this wealth of knowledge, leaving them disconnected from the latest advances in their field.

Furthermore, international conferences and symposia, where leading researchers and clinicians present their findings and exchange ideas, are

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conducted primarily in English. Glendinning and Holmström note that healthcare professionals who develop strong English communication skills are significantly better positioned to engage with international research, participate in global professional networks, and deliver higher quality patient care [1].

Beyond professional development, English plays a vital role in the day-to-day clinical practice of physical therapy. In clinical settings, physical therapists must be able to read and interpret international treatment protocols, guidelines, and outcome measurement tools, many of which are available exclusively in English. According to Kisner and Colby, the application of evidence-based therapeutic exercise principles requires physical therapists to engage directly with English-language scientific literature, as the most comprehensive and up-to-date clinical guidelines are overwhelmingly published in English [2].

The importance of English in physical therapy education cannot be overstated. Ukrainian universities and medical institutions offering programmes in physical therapy increasingly incorporate English-language textbooks, academic articles, and instructional materials into their curricula. Students who develop strong English skills during their training are better equipped to engage with international literature, pursue postgraduate education abroad, and participate in international exchange programmes. Grice emphasises that the development of English language competence in healthcare students is a critical factor in enabling them to access international professional opportunities and to function effectively in multicultural clinical environments [3].

Krutsevich notes that the modern system of physical education and rehabilitation in Ukraine requires constant updating in accordance with international standards, which requires specialists in the field not only deep professional knowledge, but also fluency in English as the main means of access to the international scientific community [4]. This observation underscores the fundamental importance of English language competence for Ukrainian physical therapy professionals who wish to engage fully with the international rehabilitation community and deliver care that meets globally recognised standards of excellence.

Despite the clear importance of English in physical therapy, many Ukrainian students and practitioners face significant challenges in developing the necessary level of proficiency. Limited exposure to authentic English-language materials, insufficient practice of spoken English, and a tendency to rely on Ukrainian-language resources can all hinder language development.

To address these challenges, the following recommendations are proposed. First, students should be encouraged to actively engage with English-language content, including online courses, webinars, podcasts, and professional journals. Second, continuing professional development programmes for practising

therapists should include English language components, ensuring that qualified professionals maintain and improve their language skills throughout their careers.

In conclusion, English has firmly established itself as the international language of physical therapy, and its importance in the field will only continue to grow in the years ahead. Investing in English language education is therefore not simply a matter of linguistic skill — it is a fundamental investment in the quality, safety, and future of physical therapy practice in Ukraine and beyond.

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