PHYSIOTHERAPY

DESCRIPTION :

Anchored in the sciences of movement, physiotherapy aims to improve or restore the function of several bodily systems. By promoting, restoring and extending the physical autonomy of patients, physiotherapists also enable them to reach their full physical potential and improve their quality of life.

This holistic approach integrates a wide range of physical and physiological interventions and therapeutic aids ranging from acute care, to rehabilitation and the management of disabilities and illnesses. Thus, physiotherapists work with different profiles of people, in particular people born with musculoskeletal irregularities, having neuromotor delays or having been involved in an accident.

WHY USE IT?

The objectives of physiotherapy, which combine prevention, care and reinforcement, aim to:

- Promote optimal mobility, physical activity, health and general well-being;
- Prevent illnesses and injuries;
- Treat injuries and the effects of illness or disability;
- Supervise and plan programs to prevent reappearance, recurrence or functional decline.

Thus, physiotherapy assesses and treats a variety of conditions related to disabilities, injuries or diagnoses of the musculoskeletal system (muscles, bones and joints), neurological, cardiac, respiratory and circulatory (blood vessels).
It has been shown to be effective in relieving joint and muscle limitations, osteoarthritis, stroke, back pain, incontinence, chronic diseases, loss of balance, lung and heart problems, head injuries, etc. In children, physiotherapy helps in particular to regulate problems of motor development and to stimulate gross motor skills.

Depending of the type of dwarfism diagnosed there can be a range of medical complications; such as hypotonia (muscle weakness causing developmental delays in children), spinal curvatures (scoliosis, lordosis, kyphosis) or leg misalignments (varus or valgus), early osteoarthritis or joint degeneration (especially in the hips and knees), problems with compression of the spinal cord, etc. In addition, a number of little people will require one or more surgeries during their lifetime. The physiotherapist will then be present to prepare the individual before the operation and re-educate them post-surgery. Because of this, physiotherapy is often essential in helping little people improve their quality of life.

FORMS OF INTERVENTION :

The physiotherapist assesses the health of their client based on history taking and various tests, such as flexibility or range of motion. They then can explore their client's abilities and functional needs in order to prepare a treatment plan that matches their client's overall health and goals.

It is important to note that successful physiotherapy treatment is based on a collaborative approach and on the client's capacity to be proactive. Thus, the client is the main actor in the various stages of their treatment and plays an important role in facilitating progress. The physiotherapy professional is there to support and guide the client in this process. With little people, many physiotherapy exercises are preventive; they will allow the child to avoid pain and potential issues in adulthood. They must therefore be practiced earnestly and regularly.

The physiotherapist may use different treatments, which include:

- Manual techniques (functional activity tests, massages, joint mobilization and manipulation, skin and injury care, etc.);
- Personalized exercise programs (designed to improve muscle tone, flexibility and range of motion, support the respiratory system, etc.);
- The prescription, manufacture and application of suitable devices and equipment;
- Environmental changes focused on removing barriers to functioning;
- Electrotherapy (ultrasound, laser, etc.);
- Hydrotherapy (therapy in water);
- Thermotherapy (application of cold or hot compresses).

RESOURCES :

Association québécoise des personnes de petite taille
https://www.aqppt.org/

Little People of Ontario
https://littlepeopleofontario.com/

Ordre professionnel de la physiothérapie au Québec
https://oppq.qc.ca/

Association canadienne de physiothérapie
https://physiotherapy.ca/fr/about-physiotherapy

Association canadienne de physiothérapie, *Description of Physiotherapy in Canada*, Ottawa, 2012



Nathalie Boels, Le nanisme. *Se faire une place au soleil dans un monde de grands*, Montréal, Éditions du CHU Sainte-Justine, 2008

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