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## Introduction

- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)** is an important component in maintaining professional competency<sup>[1]</sup>. However the participation of Physical therapists in CPD activities is limited due to the barriers such as cost, time and effort required<sup>[2]</sup>.
- Advancement of technology like Web 2.0 and diverse social media platforms offers unlimited opportunities to professionals for their CPD<sup>[3]</sup>.
- Research in other healthcare professions have identified social media as a potential and innovative tool for their CPD activities<sup>[4,5]</sup>.
- The opportunities to promote collaborative learning through diverse social media platforms in the field of Physical therapy (PT) are yet to be investigated.

## Purpose

To determine the current status and quality of research regarding the use of social media for the purpose of CPD by physical therapists.

## Methods

### Study design:

- Systematic review of the literature

### Identification of studies:

- The literature search strategy was based on the following key terms: 'continuing professional development', 'physiotherapy', 'physical therapy', and 'social media' alone and in combination.
- Articles were sourced from the following e-databases: Medline, CINHAL, COCHRANE, PEDro, and Google scholar.
- In addition articles were retrieved by manual searching of the reference lists from retrieved articles.
- Websites of physical therapy organizations and associations were also searched for policy documents, guidelines and frameworks.

## Methods – cont.

### Study selection:

- The search was restricted to articles in 'English' for the year 1980 – 2014; duplicates were removed.
- Studies were excluded if (1) they were not related to health care and (2) they were related to e-learning.

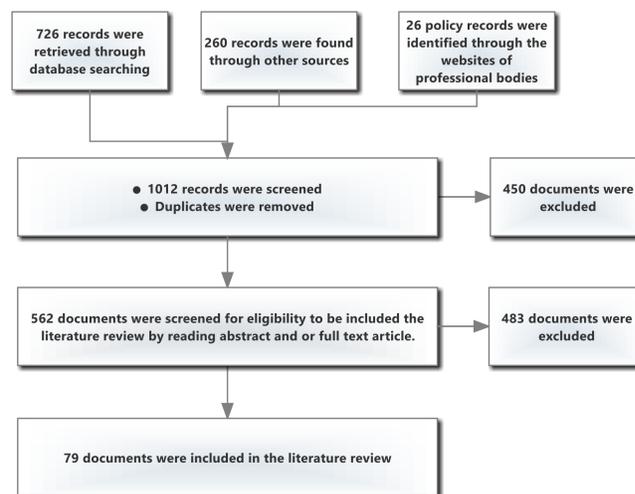
### Quality assessment:

Selected articles were categorized for the quality according to the level of evidence (Melnik & Overholt 2011.)

| Level of Evidence | Study/article type                                     |
|-------------------|--|
| I                 | Systematic Review of RCT                               |
| II                | Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)                    |
| III               | Controlled Studies (No Randomization)                  |
| IV                | Case-Controlled or Cohort Studies                      |
| V                 | Systematic review of descriptive & qualitative studies |
| VI                | Single descriptive & qualitative studies               |
| VII               | Background Information/Expert Opinion                  |

## Results

### Flow chart of study selection through the systematic review process

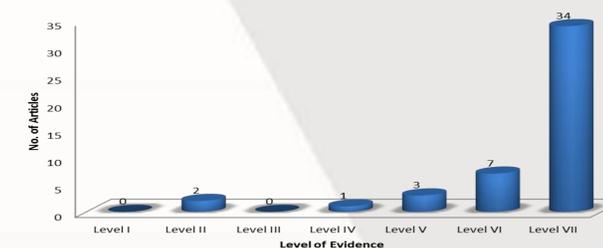


## Results

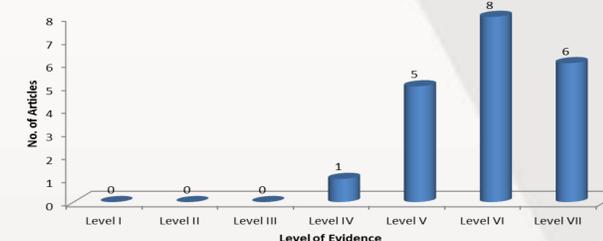
A total of n=79 articles met the inclusion criteria and were included in the review.

| Topics covered           | Number of articles |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| CPD and PT               | 47                 |
| CPD and social media     | 15                 |
| PT and social media      | 17                 |
| PT, CPD and social media | 0                  |

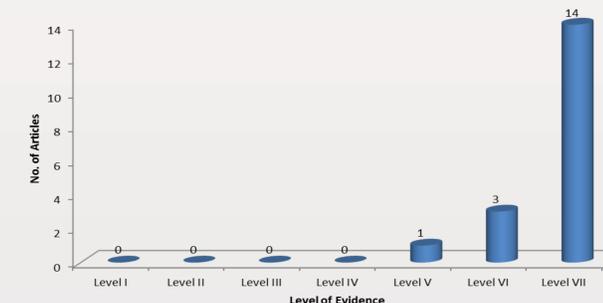
Articles on CPD and PT



Articles on CPD and Social Media



Articles on Social Media and PT



## Discussion & Conclusions

- In this systematic review it has been shown that there is a lack of studies investigating social media for CPD in the PT profession.
- This is surprising considering that social media is used by Allied healthcare professionals like nurses and occupational therapists as a platform for collaborative learning<sup>[5,6]</sup>.
- More generally, studies regarding CPD and PT, as well as CPD and social media, are of low quality.

## Recommendations

- Using social media for the purpose of CPD may open new avenues for physical therapists, professional bodies and funding authorities for CPD.
- Further research using robust methodologies is required to evaluate the role of social media in CPD of Physical therapists.

## References

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