



Committee on Research

Information note

Scientific Research at SOMT University of Physiotherapy

1. Mission statement of SOMT University of Physiotherapy in the field of scientific research

1.1. Academic educational programs.

The bachelor's and master's educational programmes of SOMT University of Physiotherapy not only provide academic, thus scientific based education, but also make a positive contribution to research in physiotherapy. Because research knowledge, insights and skills are typical components of academic education, the participation of students in research projects inherently belongs to this kind of education.

1.2. The realization of a cultural shift from an educational institute towards an academic institute.

Educational programmes of professional master's mainly stress on education. Issuing diplomas of Masters of science presupposes a substantial research and publication output from the institution. The actual yearly publication output is rather restricted, but shows a promising increase. In this respect, SOMT University of Physiotherapy aims to realize a cultural shift. This requires additional focus on the dissemination of research outcomes in the international scientific literature.

Several staff members of SOMT University of Physiotherapy hold a PhD-degree. This can play an important role in facilitating the intended change. The institution aims at developing the research staff on a structural basis. Thus, the ratio staff with/without PhD will increase following further expansion of the academic bachelor's and master's programmes in physiotherapy.

The actual research output of SOMT University of Physiotherapy is strongly related to the doctoral programmes of staff members. Additional resources are required: research output resulting from new research projects, new doctoral programmes and Bachelor and Master's theses.

1.3. University collaboration-ships concerning education and research.

For a considerable period of time, SOMT University of Physiotherapy has built up collaboration-ships with the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and the Maastricht University. In earlier years, this collaboration was mainly focused on education. On the occasion of the renewal of these cooperation agreements, additional attention will be drawn to include objectives concerning research collaboration.

Collaboration is present with universities, University Medical Centers, departments and hospitals, among others the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Delft University of Technology, the Utrecht University and the Meander Medical Center of Amersfoort.

International collaboration is present by means of Memoranda of Understanding and inter-institutional agreements according to Erasmus+ with St. John's university, York, England, Tampere University, Tampere Finland, Free University Brussels and MUHAS University, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania (see also the section "Internationalization").

1.4. Scientific research of SOMT University of Physiotherapy focusses on the main research topic "functional decline", with both a preventive and a curative orientation.

The aim is that 70 to 80 % of scientific research of SOMT University of Physiotherapy should fall within the framework of the main research topic "functional decline" (see texts on the cohort study). Functional decline means the progressive deterioration that can appear in several systems of the body in relationship to ageing. This main research topic responds to actual needs on prevention and treatment, with attention to recent social tendencies in health care. Please consult also the section on "expertise centre".

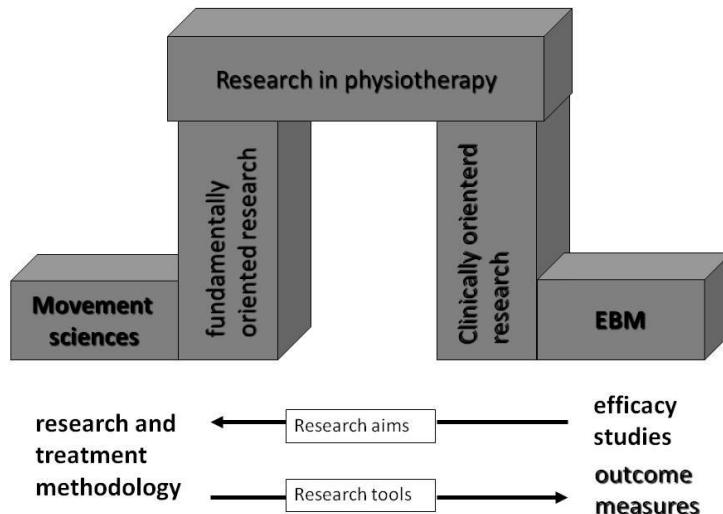
1.5. Unique selling point

Encompassing an unique configuration of several specific areas of interest in physiotherapy, SOMT University of Physiotherapy is in the region of Amersfoort an academic knowledge institute disposing of an excellent basis to fulfil, within the bounds of prevention and treatment, from a positive health perspective but with a strong emphasis on the musculoskeletal system, a leading role in clinical oriented research on the mechanisms of origin leading to functional decline, focused on interventions with the aim of optimizing functional health¹. Hereby, it can count on collaboration-ships with national and international universities, medical centers, government institutes and companies, bringing the valorization of scientific research in the municipality of Amersfoort among the possibilities (see also the section on "expertise centre").

¹ Hereby, functional health is considered as the way in which physiotherapists, within their domain of competences and in the overall context of bio-psycho-social elements, may influence health towards optimal human functioning, focussed on perceived quality of life. (See also the definition, described by Huber et al. (2011). Herewith focus is put to the fields 'corporal functions' and 'daily functioning' in the description of positive health by Huber et al. (2011).

1.6. Focus on both fundamental and clinical oriented research.

SOMT University of Physiotherapy focusses both on fundamental and clinical oriented research, with emphasis on translational research. The enhanced collaboration-ships of SOMT University of Physiotherapy facilitate this mission.



1.7. The creation of an excellence centre in human movement, with the development of a clinical advice and treatment centre.

With further enlargement of the university campus, SOMT University of Physiotherapy aims to create an excellence centre in human movement, hosting a clinical advice and treatment centre on vitality. It is part of the mission of SOMT University of Physiotherapy to train excellent clinical experts, specialized in musculoskeletal disorders and treatments.

1.8. The development of new educational programmes with inherently additional research possibilities.

With further enlargement of the university campus, SOMT University of Physiotherapy aims to develop new academic programmes, such as educational programmes in Advanced Clinical Practice (Extended Scope), postgraduate programmes following the master's programme of physiotherapy of SOMT University of Physiotherapy and the Maastricht University, and master after master's programmes. Giving response to the need of experts in the field of functional health, these new educational programmes will both contribute to the realization of the social mission statement of SOMT University of Physiotherapy and create additional possibilities for scientific research.

1.9. Bridge-building for research between educational programmes and the private sector.

SOMT University of Physiotherapy aims to build bridges between educational programmes and the private sector, including companies of medical technology, medical devices and the nutrition industry,

with the final aim of knowledge valorization. With this in view, the prospect of realizing a vitality platform is held out.

1.10. Develop inter- en multidisciplinary scientific research within the institution.

For their master's theses, students usually participate in research lines of their own master's education programme. However, when cross-fertilisation is realized between research topics of the different master's programmes, SOMT University of Physiotherapy dispose of an important potential of additional research themes. This will be broadened in the cohort study.

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2. Strategic research objectives of SOMT University of Physiotherapy (2017-2021)

2.1. Facilitating a broad collaboration on education and research with the Department of Human Movement Sciences of the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences of the Maastricht University, the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy and the Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, the Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Department of Radiation Science and Technology of the Faculty of Applied Sciences of the Delft University of Technology, the Utrecht University, the VU Medical Center of Amsterdam and the Meander Medical Center of Amersfoort.

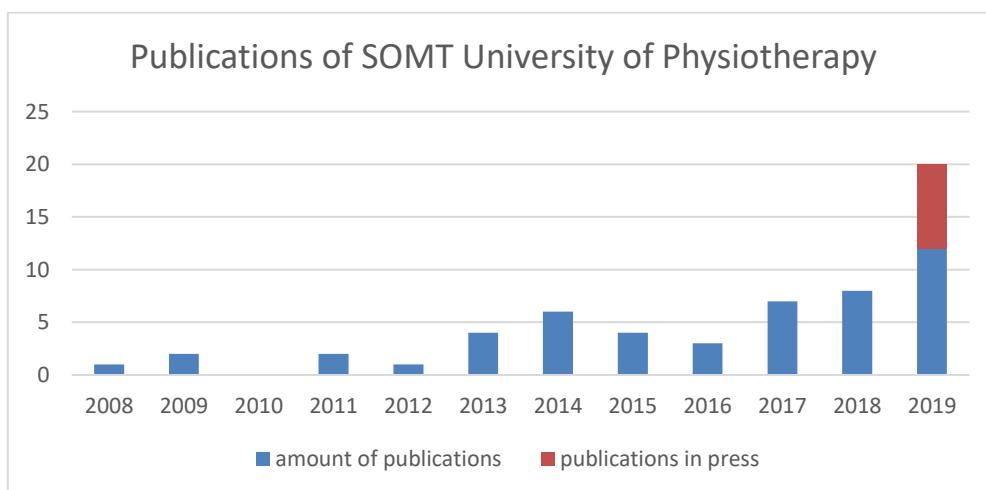
2.2. Equipping the new building of SOMT University of Physiotherapy (Softwareweg 6) as a building with research facilities.

SOMT University of Physiotherapy recently put into use a new building, which is equipped with laboratories with large research facilities, workplaces for researchers and a large auditorium. The aim is to get additional sources of income from fundraising for research projects and cooperation with private sectors.

2.3. The realization of a large regional cohort study on functional decline.

SOMT University of Physiotherapy has an overall research line: "Functional decline". Functional decline means the progressive deterioration that can appear in several body systems in relation to ageing. Functional decline is not the same for everybody. Why functional decline appears earlier or reveals a stronger progression in some individuals compared to others, is unclear. On the other hand there is evidence that motion, activity and demand on function can play an important role in the deceleration of functional decline. Hence the choice of this main research line by SOMT University of Physiotherapy with applications in each of his educational programmes.

2.4. The realization of a significant expansion of the number of scientific publications.



2.5. The deployment of a multi-year plan with expansion of the university campus towards an excellence centre in human movement, with the development of a clinical advice and treatment centre (please consult the section on “expertise centre”).

2.6. The recruitment of funds for scientific research, in collaboration with or by companies.

Recruitment of funds are carried out by means of writing grant proposals. Recent grant proposals have been submitted to ZonMW, Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ fund of the European union.

2.7. Realising knowledge valorisation in the form of spin-offs from 2021 on.

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