

Although “hacker” sometimes is used pejoratively—often referring to someone who uses a computer system without authorization—Robertson and Noteboom suggested that a better definition would be a person who enjoys exploring the details of programmable systems and how to stretch his or her capabilities.

They noted that “Web 1.0” is characterized as one-way (from Web site to user) and largely depends on e-mail alerts and listservs to exchange information; “Web 2.0” is open source, characterized by collaboration, and reflects the “liberation of information.”

They said that both consumers and health professionals can stay informed by the use of tools such as podcasts, search engines, and RSS (really simple syndication) feeds. In the area of education, health care professionals have such tools as e-learning, Web seminars (webinars), and podcasts. In the realms of collaboration and practice, PTs can use wikis, literature searches, and shared documents.

The two provided interactive demonstrations of the various tools and explained how one tool can enhance or strengthen another. For example, they explained how the process of developing a customized RSS feed can be simplified by identifying sites using Google’s advanced search features.

Robertson and Noteboom provided a list of available collaborative Web software, including applications and project management tools, as well as suggested blogs and other sites for learning about new tools and techniques. More information is available at Robertson’s Web site at www.physio-pedia.com/index.php5?title=User:Eric_Robertson.

Home Health Care: Something to Consider

David W.M. Taylor, PT, DPT, GCS, has been providing home health care for 5 years. “Before that I was “institutionalized. My sky was fluorescent, and I ran from patient to patient in an acute care setting,” he told the audience at Thursday’s “Home Health Care: What Every Student, PT, and PTA Should Know.”

Taylor said he would never want to go back to his old routine. In home health, he sees patients in their natural environment. He gets to see the obstacles the patient deals with on a daily basis. “You never know what’s going to happen when the patient opens the door. It is a new experience every day,” he said. Taylor dispelled the myth that nurses are the ones who run home health care. “Those days are gone,” remarked Taylor. “We have evolved into a partnership.”

As the population ages, there are many opportunities for professionals in this field. Medical and technological advances as well as patient preferences for care in the home make home health care a great place to use all the skills in the physical therapist’s skills set. These skills include organization, flexibility, autonomy, effective communication in multiple formats, confidence, compassion, and efficient coordination of care.

“Our scope of practice includes examination, evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis, interventions, outcomes, ethics, and compliance. I can’t think of anything we can’t do because we practice in a home setting,” said Taylor.

Sometimes that means treating patients without electricity or running water in their homes. While a PT may not choose to live this way, Taylor says PTs can’t refuse to treat patients because they live in a certain manner.

The benefits of doing home health care are numerous. Being able to provide one-on-one care means that it is truly patient centered. The PT is in a multidisciplinary setting and is able to participate in patient education. “Being a clinical educator is a great way to give back to the profession,” said Taylor. “You receive exposure to different populations and management issues, and home health care facilitates problem solving.”

Session Demonstrates Techniques To Strengthen Mind-Body Awareness

A standing-room only audience listened to, watched, and participated in demonstrations of yoga and other activities related to rehabilitation and physical therapy. “Mind-Body-Based Practices in Rehabilitation” at PT 2009 featured Matthew Taylor, PT, PhD, and Matthew Sanford discussing and showing how to incorporate yoga and other complementary practices into a rehabilitation program. Sanford, who lost the use of his legs in an automobile accident at the age of 13, is an author, public speaker, and yoga teacher. He also is the founder of Mind Body Solutions, a Minnesota-based charitable organization that seeks to explore the connection between the mind and the body.

Taylor and Sanford emphasized that rehabilitation is a two-way process that must involve and affect not only the patient but also the physical therapist. Taylor said integrative medicine “reaffirms the importance of the relationship between the practitioner and the patient, focusing on the whole person.”

Taylor and Sanford demonstrated a number of techniques and exercises designed to help patients become more in touch with their bodies. Following some of the demonstrations, audience members were encouraged to try out those techniques.



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