

# Report of the SSPH+ Academic initiative “The cost and value of physiotherapy in Switzerland: a health systems perspective”

17 April 2024

## 1. Introduction

This report gives basic information about the project team, the activities and objectives achieved so far, as well as further activities that we propose to complete in the coming months.

Attached are two documents prepared ahead of and, respectively, just after the stakeholder dialogue took place:

- the document “Note in preparation for the final stakeholder dialogue” addresses the first objective of our project, namely “Identify and debate around the hot policy questions related to physiotherapy in Switzerland”;
- the document “Results of the stakeholder dialogue” addresses the second objective of our project, namely “Summarise the positions of different stakeholders in this area”.

The last project objective (“Identify the main research gaps that are worth addressing with research at the cross-roads between health economics, health services research, and public health”) will be further discussed within the research group, which plans to continue collaborating on the physiotherapy sector, building on the results – and visibility – achieved by this initiative made possible by the SSPH+.

## 2. Project team

SUPSI DEASS: Carlo De Pietro, Igor Francetic, Alessandro Schneebeli.

UNIL Unisanté: Joachim Marti, Anna Nicolet.

ZHAW School of Management and Law: Simon Wieser, Thomas Egger, Irene Kobler.

Sophie K. Brandt (Universität Luzern).

## 3. Activities

The project fostered close and fruitful cooperation between the three proposing SSPH+ institutions (SUPSI, UNIL, and ZHAW). It also benefited from the valuable contribution of Sophie Brandt, PhD student SLHS at the University of Lucerne and member of the Physioswiss committee. Igor Francetic (former post-doc researcher at the University of Manchester and among the original proponents of the

project; meanwhile recruited at DEASS SUPSI) and Brigitte Wirth (former ZHAW staff member and meanwhile moved to Balgrist University Hospital) also made a fundamental contribution to the project.

The main activities carried out by the project team are as follows:

- Kick-off meeting. The research partners met in September 2022 in order to define project goals, areas to be develop, and methodology.
- Online ranking exercise. Participants, representing various stakeholders, were asked to rank potential eight cost drivers and eight benefits of physiotherapy, according to their order of importance. The list of cost drivers and benefits was developed by the research team based on the available literature and the experience of the participating partners. The invitation to complete this exercise was sent by email. The respondents could suggest other potentially important cost drivers and benefits. The ranking helped to identify the most relevant areas to expand during the subsequent interviews.
- Interviews with stakeholders. Overall, 18 interviews (including those with some of the participants of the ranking exercise) confirm the divergent views of various stakeholders addressing the general role of physiotherapy in the society, problems of provision, future of physiotherapy, etc. Interviews were analysed highlighting areas of disagreement between stakeholders. Participants were then invited to a webinar to explain the results.
- Presentation at conferences. The outline of the project (objectives, background, phases and methods, first results) was presented at the ALASS annual conference held in México on 30 August-1 September 2023 and at the Swiss Public Health Conference held in Lausanne on 12-13 September 2023 (parallel session “Health care - New results from Health Care Research”).
- Stakeholder dialogue. The meeting took place on 4 December 2023 from 10.30 a.m. to 3.45 p.m. at ZHAW in Zurich. It was attended by sixteen people plus the project team members. The full list of participants is available at the end of the document “Results of the stakeholder dialogue”.

By the end of summer 2024, the intention is to produce two articles: a shorter one to be published in a Swiss journal; the other in an international health policy journal.

## 4. Finances

The expenses incurred for the project are as follows:

- Personnel costs: 20'397 CHF (divided into one third for each of the three institutions involved)
- Catering, travel reimbursements, etc.: 4'603 CHF.

As expected, the time actually committed by researchers to the project cost more than the SSPH+ recognised. However, we would like to thank the SSPH+ for the opportunity it has given SUPSI, Unisanté and ZHAW researchers to collaborate on topics that are of great interest.

We will do our utmost to ensure that this first collaboration, as well as the results already achieved, can be developed in the context of competitive research or mandates to be acquired in the near future.