BACKGROUND
The continuous upgrading of professional competence and standing of German physiotherapists have brought up a demand for extending their professional autonomy. Introducing direct access to physiotherapy in Germany will require a generalized optimization of the physiotherapist’s competence in order to reach international standards.

PURPOSE
Developing a method to identify unconsidered competencies in different German educational systems required for working autonomously in the concept of patient self-referral (PSR).

1) A literature research and guided expert interviews with Australian lecturers were conducted in order to highlight the challenges in the concept of patient self-referral.

2) With the help of various internationally and nationally recognized statements a specific method of analyzing the educational needs of German physiotherapists was developed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status Target</th>
<th>Competencies First Contact Practitioner (n = 85)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional competence</td>
<td>Personal competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Skills</td>
<td>Social competence Autonomy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Transformed into the matrix of the German Qualifications Framework [2]

Status Quo
Competencies German Physiotherapist
Profile 1: State examination (3 years vocational course)
Profile 2: Bachelor’s degree (University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück)

NEEDS ANALYSIS

The identified deficits relate to the new demands within the system of patient self-referral:

- The ethical, legal and professional issues that inform and shape physiotherapy practice
- Personal and professional development: confidence, managing uncertainty, change and stress
- Decision making, clinical reasoning and problem solving skills

* The highest demand on curricular adjustment:
1. Forming a diagnosis on the basis of physiotherapy assessment
2. Acknowledge cross-professional boundaries and employ appropriate referral procedures
3. Appreciate the significance of professional self-regulation
4. Deploy and manage support staff effectively and efficiently

CONCLUSIONS

- Introducing patient self-referral can be challenging. The performed needs analysis can be seen as a potential way in which to describe the current competency levels of German physiotherapists.
- German physiotherapists seem to be well prepared in the profession-specific skills and demonstrate solid knowledge of physiotherapy on a scientific basis as well as in the context of service delivery and professional practice.
- Unconsidered competencies were detected within the fields of professional and personal competence but mainly relate to the new demands within the system of patient self-referral.
- These findings might be helpful in the development of an education program for physiotherapy within Germany that qualifies a student to practice as an independent professional in a system that makes patients and their decision-making as the focus.

REFERENCES