

Introduction

The research and development strategy is based on the mission and vision of Aarhus University Hospital and a local interpretation at the Department of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy describing a clear research and development strategy for the department.

The department's research and development activities are related to the four research programmes for staff with a medium-cycle higher education: Rehabilitation, The acute patient, Communication and Ethics and patient involvement. Inter-professional projects are given a high priority and emphasis is on close collaboration with clinical departments, internal and external research environments, Aarhus University, University Colleges as well as municipalities and regional hospitals. Collaboration agreements are established between Aarhus University Hospital and Aarhus University.

The overall purpose of the department's research and development strategy is to create more knowledge and offer the best treatment to the benefit of patients.

The research and development strategy at Department of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy must reflect and support the hospital's focus on coherence between research, development, education and patient treatment. This is illustrated in the figure below:

Research and development activities are primarily focused on optimising patients' functional ability in accordance with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF).

Department of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy conducts research and development applying both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A number of methods are used, including literature review, methodology studies, cohort studies, effectiveness studies, and economic evaluation alongside the clinical studies.

Coherence between development of therapeutic documentation and clinical guidelines is ensured.

The department management and those responsible for research and development are particularly responsible for supporting and developing a research and development culture in the department, through interaction with clinical practice and implementation of new knowledge to optimise patient treatment.

A research and development culture supports research talent development among staff and promotes academic career paths.

Vision

The vision for research and development in Department of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy is to conduct research and development a high international level collecting, creating and implementing knowledge and communicating research and development results.

Four themes of the research and development strategy:

1. Research and development activities.
2. Implementation and knowledge-sharing.
3. Research and development collaborations and networks.
4. Research and development competences.

The following describes focus, purpose, interventions and performance in the four themes:

1. Research and development activities

Focus

Develop and qualify assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of patients'/patient function at a high, specialised level.

Interventions

- test and assess pre-, per- and post-hospital interventions to improve or maintain patients' functional level
- support transition towards outpatient pathways focusing on assessment of functional ability in short patient pathways
- optimise patients' functional ability in coherent patient pathways across sectors
- include the patient perspective in research and development of patients' functional ability.

Performance

- publication of 20 articles in peer-reviewed journals during the next five years
- publication of two articles in non peer-reviewed journals during the next five years
- drafting of project descriptions and funding applications for new research and development projects
- participation in making relevant national clinical guidelines
- drafting of project descriptions and clarification of funding .

Focus

Perform economic evaluations alongside clinical research on functional ability interventions

Performance

- publication of five articles in peer-reviewed journals during the next five years
- at initiation of research projects decisions are made involving the economic perspective.

Focus

Develop, assess and implement health technology in both in- and out-patient pathways

Interventions

- develop methods to monitor patients' exercising in their own home
- apply health technology in both in- and out-patient pathways.

Performance

- publication of two articles in peer-reviewed journals during the next five years
- application of health technology in different fields of treatment and rehabilitation.

2. Implementation and knowledge-sharing

Focus

Further development of the learning organisation currently evaluating and implementing new knowledge

Interventions

- implement knowledge based on research and development
- communicate knowledge from research and development projects locally, nationally and internationally
- organize research and development seminars for physiotherapists and occupational therapists in the Central Denmark Region and associated municipalities
- plan and conduct case reports.

Performance

- drafting of an implementation plan for the department
- drafting of implementation plan for termination of projects
- planning of competence development in accordance with the implementation plan
- updating clinical guidelines and instructions
- communicating results in peer-reviewed journals at international and national conferences, in professional magazines and to patient associations
- hosting a research and development day every third year
- drafting of an annual case rapport in the department.

3. Research and development collaboration and networks

Focus

Further development of collaboration within research and development locally, nationally and internationally

Interventions

- further develop the collaboration between the four research programmes at Aarhus University Hospital
- develop research and development networks locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Performance

- completing research activities primarily based on the research programmes
- initiating research collaboration within the research programmes at Aarhus University Hospital
- establishing internal networks for staff working with research and development
- participating in regional and national networks for therapists responsible for quality, education and documentation
- establishing and further developing national and international research collaborations.

4. Research and development competences

Focus

Support burgeoning talent development among staff

Interventions

- develop academic competences among clinical therapists
- develop competences in communication and supervision among therapists with a master of science degree, PhD students and researchers.

Performance

- employment of therapists to work within the development field
- annual internal courses in critical assessment of literature
- staff participation in research and development projects
- supervision of staff studying at bachelor, master, candidate and PhD level is managed by department therapists with academic competences
- drafting of terms of reference for research networks for therapists at master and PhD level

Focus

Support academic career paths

Interventions

- implement the "Employment and job function structure at Aarhus University Hospital" within the area of research and development
- education of physiotherapists and occupational therapists at master and PhD level

Performance

- within the next five years, 1 out of 5 therapists in Department of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy have a or master degree
- Initiate one PhD project annually entrenched from the Department of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy
- Participate in one PhD project annually attached to the Department of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy

Organisation of research and development

A Research and Development Unit has been established at Department of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy. The purpose is to create coherence between research and development activities initiated at the department and ensure that new knowledge is integrated in clinical practice to the benefit of patients.

A multi-method test and movement laboratory has been established for use internally at the department by different staff groups and across specialities at Aarhus University Hospital as well as with external collaborators.

Follow-up on the research and development strategy

The research and development strategy applies from 2015 to 2020 and is discussed annually at status meetings to ensure that interventions and performances are in accordance with the detailed plan of action attached to the strategy.