

Report — IHS Physiotherapy SIG

The Special Interest Group Physiotherapy met during the **International Headache Conference in Sao Paulo on 12th Sept 2025**. The meeting was attended by approximately 60 physiotherapists in person and joined by about 50 attendees online. Topics discussed were short and long-term goals of the group and how to best approach them.

The SIG conducted an **international survey** about how different types of headaches are treated by physiotherapists internationally. Results are currently being prepared for publication. In brief:

76 participants from 26 countries completed all mandatory sections of the survey and were included in the analysis. Most respondents reported seeing cervicogenic headaches and migraine very often in clinical practice, tension-type headaches often, and headaches associated with temporomandibular disorders or trauma/whiplash sometimes.

Current Treatment Approaches:

Manual therapy, education, and exercise are used equally often for cervicogenic headache and TMD, while manual therapy is used somewhat less for migraine and tension-type headaches. Other approaches such as electrotherapy and mind–body methods were mentioned less frequently across all headache types. The specific types of education, manual therapy, and exercise varied widely across responses and headache categories.

Referral Pathways:

Most referrals came from neurologists or directly from patients themselves. General practitioners, pain specialists, and other physiotherapists referred patients occasionally. Neurologists were the only health professionals that participants often or very often referred their patients to. Psychiatrists/psychologists, pain specialists, GPs, and dentists were mentioned as professionals to whom participants sometimes referred patients. Almost all respondents stated that multidisciplinary care is important or extremely important for patients with headaches.

Next Steps

Towards a better training of physiotherapists about headaches, ideally at undergraduate level, a Delphi study is currently being prepared. This will focus on content and learning outcomes that should be included in undergraduate and/or postgraduate education programs.

The great enthusiasm of this group will likely result in more activities that can be reported during our annual meeting which is planned for September 2026 and will be announced on the website.

Kerstin & Debora & Zhiqi & Gwen