

Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand Summer Scholarship Report

Project title: Formal complaints against physiotherapists in New Zealand, 2012-15

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Statement of Purpose: Summer Studentship project undertaken at the request of the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand (PBNZ) to review the complaints made against physiotherapists between 2012 and 2015

Recommendations for further research and practice:

Based on the collective findings of the literature review and the data analysis, the following recommendations can be offered:

- PBNZ should establish clear categories to be used when cataloguing complaints, with definitions that delineate between terms and clearly explain key concepts like ‘boundary issues’ and ‘unprofessional behaviour’
- Disseminate the classification system throughout schools, professional bodies and other organisations throughout New Zealand to allow for implementation in future curricula and practice guidelines
- The Board may wish to work with other Registering Boards both within New Zealand and internationally to identify if there are any trends across the profession or in the types of complaints seen in other jurisdictions
- Given the lack of evidence of any intervention currently working to effectively prevent ethical breaches by experienced practitioners, the Board may wish to undertake a broader search of the literature and examine international best practice before implementing potentially expensive and ineffective prophylactic measures
- The Board may wish to consider the cost-benefit of any preventative measures, given the relatively low number of complaints lodged against physiotherapists annually.