



International Acupuncture and Dry Needling Association of Physiotherapists

www.iadapt.physio

President: Kerry Fung (Hong Kong)
Secretary: Susan Kohut (New Zealand)

IADAPT Accreditation Scheme for Trigger Point Dry Needling Education for Physiotherapists / Physical Therapists (55-hours)

The International Acupuncture and Dry Needling Association of Physiotherapists (IADAPT) is the Acupuncture and Dry Needling Specialty-group of World Physiotherapy. IADAPT is a physiotherapist-based group, with expertise in needling therapies with physiotherapy related specific background knowledge and scope of practice. It is important for IADAPT to preserve both basic scientific needling knowledge background and scope of practice in physiotherapy. Biomedical approaches to dry needling are essential and often combined with therapy-based frameworks.

Objectives

This scheme is designed to set out standards for and accredit programs that meet the requirements of IADAPT in the requirement for dry needling education for Physiotherapists / Physical Therapists to use the technique safely and effectively. Physiotherapists / Physical Therapists who had taken the programs should be able to perform dry needling and optionally some related techniques based on a contemporary approach safely and effectively in the treatment of common pain and musculoskeletal conditions. Dry Needling is recognised by IADAPT as originating from trigger point dry needling of myofascial trigger points, and in some countries has evolved to an integrated/ sustained dry needling paradigm.

Trigger point needling is practiced within all the spectrums of needling practiced by IADAPT members and is practiced within 'myofascial acupuncture' procedures.

Required Elements of Program Design

The programs should be designed to be delivered in at least 55 Contact Hours* with demonstration and practical of the following mandatory contents:

- 1 Dry Needling techniques
 - 1a. Definitions and Types of Dry Needling
 - 1b. Concepts and neurophysiological basis of dry needling
 - 1c. Knowledge of evidence-based dry needling treatment



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- 2 Myofascial pain syndrome and myofascial trigger points
 - 2a. Neurophysiological theories
 - 2b. Clinical and Laboratory findings
 - 2c. Clinical reasoning on points selection for dry needling
 - 2d. Anatomy and identification of tender and trigger points (manual and/or other techniques)
- 3 Safety Issues
 - 3a. Safe application of dry needling
 - 3b. Risk management and handling of adverse effects
 - 3c. Indications and Contraindications of dry needling
- 4 Practical application of Needling of common trigger points
 - 4a. Upper Limb
 - 4b. Lower Limb
 - 4c. Torso and Head
- 5 Logbook of teaching and clinical hours with structured reflection on learning
- 6 Clinical supervision of practice 20% - 40% of the total teaching hours
- 7 Demonstration of safe dry needling practice

* A minimum of 55 contact hours is considered the basic requirement to ensure **safe dry-needling practice for Physiotherapists / Physical Therapists**.

IADAPT Recommended Curriculum Criteria

The recommended curriculum for the program should include the following components:

1. Dry Needling techniques
 - Definitions and Types of Dry Needling
 - Neurophysiological basis of dry needling effects
 - Evidence-based dry needling treatment according to updated literature
 - Detailed information on Indications and Contraindications of dry needling (e.g. IADAPT safety manual)
2. Myofascial pain syndrome (MPS) and myofascial trigger points (MTrPs)



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- Neurophysiology and theories explained regarding MTrPs and MPS
 - Detailed information on Clinical and Laboratory findings
 - Theoretical and Practical application of the Clinical reasoning procedure on points selection and technique selected for dry needling
 - Description of the Superficial and surgical Anatomy of MTrPs
 - Identification of trigger points using manual palpation techniques. Optionally, it may be included the identification of MTrPs using other useful techniques like diagnostic ultrasound, algometer, electrodiagnostics, etc.
3. Application of Dry Needling for MTrPs
- Dry needling for the Upper Limb
 - Dry needling for the Lower Limb
 - Dry needling the Torso (back, thorax and abdomen) and Head
4. Safety of Dry Needling Application
- Demonstration and practical application of safe dry needling techniques including demonstration of risk management, infection control and handling of the adverse effects. (IADAPT safety manual can serve as a basis)
5. Clinical Practice
- Clinical practice on patients, delivered in legal licensed health entities (clinics, hospitals), supervised by licensed and accredited/approved educators.
 - Logbook of teaching and clinical hours with structured reflection on learning
 - Confirmed application of taught and safely practiced dry needling techniques by the participant, for stated body parts (e.g. if dry needling of the head or thorax was not taught this should be stated in the signed logbook of practice (signed by the supervisor regarding safety))

The program should be delivered with face-to-face teaching and supervised practice (20%-40%) that should construct the main programming of the 55-hour education. Part of the lectures (up to 10% of the total hours) may be given through video conferencing, where interactions between the lecturer and students are possible, but not pre-recorded videos.

Practical examination hours are the only assessment time that can be included within the 55-hour programme.



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Educators designing basic dry needling programs are not restricted to developing programs that contain more contact hours

Pre-recorded online studies, distance learning, self-directed study and other non-contact pedagogical approaches may be utilized to enrich the program but should not substitute the minimum number of hours set forth by IADAPT.

Proof of competency by formal evaluation is mandatory and will assess all learning outcomes of all modules. It is recommended that formal evaluation of students is undertaken using a variety of assessment tools, including, but not limited to:

1. Student Presentation (optional)
2. Written Examination (mandatory)
3. Practical Examination (mandatory)
4. Clinical Placement (optional)
5. Log-book of practice, signed by instructor / supervisor

Self-study of at least 100 hours is expected from students in readings, assignments, and acupuncture practice, etc.

Examples of program design are shown in the appendix for reference. However, they are **not** intended to be restrictive. Program developers may design programs in accordance with local, cultural, legal or other needs or requirements. Nevertheless, they must fulfill the above-mentioned criteria.

Teaching Faculty

Faculty members may be drawn from different professional disciplines who are qualified to deliver lectures, teach practical dry needling, supervise practice and supervise clinical attachment or placement in dry needling. However, at least one member of the faculty must be a qualified Physiotherapist / Physical Therapist with current membership of a Physiotherapy Association that is a member of a World Physiotherapy.

Medium of Instruction

The medium of instruction may be in any local language or dialect that is suitable for the participants according to the needs of different countries or areas. However, there must be an English version of the program details for the assessment of an application for accreditation and the subsequent follow-up assessments submitted to IADAPT.



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Entrance & Graduation Requirement

The main cohort of applicants must be duly registered physiotherapists / physical therapists. Other relevant medical and health care professionals may enroll in the program according to local requirements. Education for these participants is not recognized as IADAPT accredited.

The program must assess students to ensure adequacy of knowledge and safe needling practice. A **written examination** and a **practical examination** are mandatory requirements. Other forms of assessment, e.g. student presentation, clinical placement, continuous assessment of return demonstration, etc. may also be included in the evaluation of student performance. The assessments should ensure that the student can utilize dry needling based on sound Physiotherapy /Physical Therapy assessment utilizing clinical reasoning and using dry needling in a safe and effective manner.

Award of IADAPT Certification to qualifying students requires demonstration of 55 contact hours of education and supervision and the passing of all written and practical examinations, and, if applicable, other forms of assessment (e.g. presentation, continuous assessment and clinical placement).

Certification issued by IADAPT

Upon successful accreditation of the program, IADAPT will issue a “**Certificate of Accreditation**” to the school, association or authority (the **institution**) holding the education program. The certificate is valid for 4-years and it is expected that the institution continuing to run the program should apply for an updated accreditation from IADAPT within the 4-year cycle. The institution may use the phrase “**Accredited by the International Acupuncture and Dry Needling Association of Physiotherapists, an Official Specialty Group of the World Physiotherapy**” or its abbreviated or local equivalent to describe the program they offered while the certificate of accreditation is valid. The institution should inform the IADAPT if there is any change in their curriculum.

A certificate to the **student** who is a registered or recognized physiotherapist / physical therapist has undertaken and passed the assessments may also be issued a “**Certificate of Dry Needling for Physiotherapists (Physical Therapists)**” for the accredited program. The application for this certificate must be initiated by the Institution that offered the program. They must include in the application proof of the studentship, successful completion of the program, and certification of the student membership of a World Physiotherapy Member Organisation.



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Monitoring of Accredited Programs

Institutions offering an IADAPT accredited program should provide IADAPT with **basic information regarding the delivery of the accredited course**, including the course title, scheduled dates, locations, where the course will be delivered, lecturers, links for online presentations and links to publicly available course information (e.g., course webpages or registration pages). This information allows IADAPT to maintain records of accredited activities and facilitates monitoring of program delivery when required. Institutions offering an IADAPT accredited program are expected to continue delivering the curriculum, faculty structure and assessment procedures described in their accreditation application. IADAPT needs to be notified of any changes that may occur.

During the accreditation period, the institution should notify IADAPT of any **significant changes** to the curriculum, teaching faculty, or assessment structure. Minor timetable or logistical changes do not require notification.

IADAPT may periodically request confirmation that the program continues to meet accreditation requirements. This may include submission of updated curriculum outlines, teaching schedules, or other relevant documentation.

Where necessary, IADAPT may conduct a **review of the accredited program**. This may include an online meeting with the course provider, review of teaching materials, or, in exceptional circumstances, an **on-site visit or observation of teaching** to ensure that the program is delivered in accordance with the accredited standards.

Complaints and Adverse Events

IADAPT may also receive and review **complaints or reports of adverse events** related to accredited programs, both faculty as well as students may submit these via email to contact@IADAPT.physio. Where necessary, IADAPT may request clarification or additional information from the institution.

If substantial deviation from the accredited program is identified, IADAPT may request corrective actions to ensure continued compliance with accreditation standards.

Renewal of accreditation

Accreditation is valid for a period of four years. Institutions wishing to continue using IADAPT accreditation must apply for renewal prior to the expiration of the accreditation period.



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The renewal application should include confirmation that the program continues to meet the IADAPT standards, along with documentation of any curriculum changes implemented since the previous accreditation.

Withdrawal or Suspension of Accreditation

In exceptional circumstances where an accredited program no longer meets IADAPT standards, IADAPT may review the accreditation status of the program.

Where concerns are identified, IADAPT will first seek clarification from the institution and may request corrective actions. If significant concerns remain unresolved, IADAPT reserves the right to suspend or withdraw accreditation.

Fees

- Application for Accreditation of the Program: GBP300
- Application for issuance of Certificate of Acupuncture for Physiotherapists (Physical Therapists) for individual students: GBP20 per certificate

Application Procedure

Fill out relevant forms and submit it via email to contact@IADAPT.physio or accreditation@iadapt.physio. All fees should be paid to the account of IADAPT via Bank Transfer or PayPal. Invoice will be advised in due course.

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Appendix

Examples of Dry Needling Program

These examples demonstrate how a 55-hour dry needling course may be designed. It is not intended to be restrictive. Program developers may design programs that fulfill the objectives of IADAPT in accordance with local, cultural, legal or other needs or requirements. These examples only serve as some ideas. Strict adherence to these examples may not guarantee successful accreditation by IADAPT.

Example 1: Basic Dry Needling course

THE DRY NEEDLING PROGRAM

A basic dry needling program should have a minimum of 55 contact hours with the demonstration of the following mandatory contents

1. Introduction to trigger point and dry needling concepts
2. Safe application of dry needling in all areas in conformity with the current IADAPT guidelines for safe needling
3. Trigger point dry needling:
 - a. Evidence-based medicine for trigger point dry needling
 - b. Neuroscience underpinning actions of trigger point needling
 - c. Related physical therapies to dry needling
 - d. Practical application of dry needling
4. Myofascial Pain syndrome (Epidemiology, Clinical characteristics, laboratory findings, natural course of the disease, predisposing & aggravating factors), pathophysiology mechanisms.
5. Clinical reasoning on selecting points for dry needling
6. Handheld percutaneous electrical stimulation in dry needling, indications, contraindications, clinical application
7. Practical application and demonstration of most common muscles for the upper limb, the lower limb, the back side of the torso, the thorax and abdomen, the head
8. Clinical supervised practice



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Example 2: The Basic Dry Needling Program

A basic Dry Needling program should have a minimum of 55 contact hours with the demonstration of the following mandatory contents

1. Introduction to Acupuncture and Dry needling concepts, Local action and Physiology of needling, Regional & Systemic effects of needling
2. Pain neurophysiology and inhibitory mechanisms elicited by dry needling
3. Myofascial Pain syndrome (Epidemiology, Clinical characteristics, laboratory findings, natural course of the disease, predisposing & aggravating factors), pathophysiology mechanisms, properties of tender and trigger points, palpation, detection and needling of most common trigger and tender points (practical) in the Upper, Lower extremities, spine (back side), thorax (front side), head areas
4. Dry needling in spinal pathologies, osteoarthritis, rheumatological conditions, headaches, muscle, tendon & ligament pathologies, entrapment neuropathies
5. Clinical reasoning on selecting points for dry needling
6. Safe application of dry needling in all areas in conformity with the updated safety standards
7. Handheld percutaneous electrical stimulation in dry needling, indications, contraindications, clinical application
8. Supervised clinical practice