Psychologically-informed physiotherapy: Using online interviews and arts-based methods in healthcare research

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Psychologically-informed physiotherapy is recommended by the World Health Organisation and expected by the UK regulatory body. It is supported by the evidence base and is encouraged in physiotherapy training, yet there is a lack of consistency and standardisation at undergraduate and post-qualifying level.

The research will explore newly qualified physiotherapists’ use, and understanding, of psychology within physiotherapy practice. Online interviews will be combined with an image produced by the physiotherapists representing their experience of psychology in physiotherapy.

Undertaking fieldwork in a pandemic requires flexibility and innovation. Online interviews ensure flexibility while maintaining the benefits of face to face interviews, including engaging with participants, gathering rich data, and providing a platform for individual experiences to be heard. Arts-based methods are innovative and were chosen to work as an aid to the online interview. Image creation will prompt reflection on the topic prior to the interview and encourage individuals to engage in a wider discussion of the topic.

Such constructivist, qualitative methods are used infrequently within the traditional, biomedical field of physiotherapy. As such, the research project will combine innovative yet relevant methods to explore and give voice to a, hitherto, silent cohort of health professionals.