

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UEMS-PRM SECTION

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UEMS PRM Section

This booklet is dedicated to all PRM specialists who have contributed to developing PRM across Europe.

ORIGIN OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE IN EUROPE

HISTORY OF UEMS PRM SECTION

The development of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine as a medical specialty began in earnest after World War II. In the years following the war, there was a growing recognition of the need for specialised medical care focused on rehabilitation, particularly for those affected by war injuries, polio epidemics, and other conditions causing physical disabilities.

Key milestones in the development of PRM in Europe include:

1950s: The first signs of developing a specific Rehabilitation Medicine policy emerged worldwide and in Europe. Physicians from different countries began collaborating to define and establish this new medical speciality.

1954: The first preliminary work meeting was held in Wolfsburg, Germany. This marked the beginning of regular meetings among European pioneers in the field to

harmonise the scope of practice and training requirements for the new specialty.

1963: The European Federation of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (EFPMR) was officially and legally recognised on April 25, 1963. Its founding was published in the *Moniteur Belge*, the official journal of the Kingdom of Belgium, as the federation was registered in Brussels. The EFPMR played a crucial role in:

- Implementing processes to ensure the autonomy of the new specialisation
- Establishing a specific structure and methodology
- Defining the foundations for specialist training
- Promoting national scientific bodies and their modes of collaboration
- Defending the general interests of the profession

1969: The European Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine was established. Founded by prominent rehabilitation medicine figures, including F. Barnosell, H. Fallet, D. Fiandesio, L. Guttman, G. Valobra, R. Waghmacker, and W. Zinn, the Academy aimed to consolidate the philosophy of rehabilitation medicine through distinct activities.

HISTORY OF UEMS-PRM SECTION

A history with several steps

1958-1970: Early Foundations The Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes (UEMS) was founded in 1958 by Oscar Gaudin and Jacques Courtois in Brussels. Its primary goal was to harmonise specialist training in Europe to ensure high-quality healthcare as doctors began moving freely between European countries.

In 1959, representatives from six European Community countries formed the Permanent Committee of the Medical Community, giving UEMS consultative status with European governmental authorities.

A section for "Physiotherapy" (as it was then called) was founded in Luxembourg on March 17, 1963. However, it did not become operational until 1971.

1971-1980: Establishment and Early Challenges The first autonomous meeting of the PRM section took place on May 7-8, 1971, in Mondorf Les Bains, Luxembourg. Key figures at this meeting included J Emmerechts (Belgium), Amedeo

Tonazzi (Italy), Fritz Venema (Netherlands), and René Waghemacker (France).

The section faced two immediate challenges

1. Deciding on the name of the section and the discipline
2. Legitimising national representations, as some delegates belonged to medical disciplines only tangentially related to PRM

In 1974, the monospecialist section of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine obtained legal status in European law after administrative delays. Amedeo Tonazzi was elected Secretary General, a position he held from 1974 to 1990. Fritz Venema and André Bardot served as presidents during this period.

Key achievements during this period included:

- Establishing an official definition of the specialisation
- Working towards giving the specialisation the same name across European countries
- Defining the role of the PRM specialist
- Providing guidelines for optimal training to standardise across countries

- Studying contents and methods for continuous specialist preparation
- Establishing optimal relations with non-medical professionals in rehabilitation

1981-1990: Growth and Recognition In 1981, the section presented its views on the definition of speciality and training in the discipline to the European Community Commission's Consultative Committee for the Training of Doctors. This was a crucial step in gaining recognition for the specialisation's autonomy and name.

In 1985, André Bardot succeeded Fritz Venema as President of the Section.

In 1987, the section produced an important document titled "The Role of the Physician Specializing in Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine in the Assessment of Disability for Social and Professional Reintegration."



In 1988, representatives from the Section, the European Federation of PRM, and the European Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine collaborated on a "White Book" on Rehabilitation Medicine.

1991-2000: The European Board and Examination System In 1990, the section dedicated itself to creating the European Board of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine. The Board's statutes were registered on June 19, 1991, in The Hague.

The Board's Executive Committee, assisted by a Teaching Committee of 10 university professors, established:

- The curriculum for PRM specialist training
- A theoretical program
- Practical internship methods
- A bilingual English-French logbook

The first European Examination was held in Ghent in 1993. From 1996, it was held simultaneously in five different centres (Madrid, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, Zurich).

2001-Present: Modernization and Expansion In 2001, Alain Delarque succeeded Antoine Macouin as Secretary. He reorganised the work, adding an assistant secretary, Georges de Korvin, and a webmaster.

A new website, www.euro-prm.org, was created. This well-structured site is regularly updated and receives an increasing number of visitors. It includes a list of training sites approved by the board, which numbered over 100 by 2004.

The current structure of the PRM Section, led by an executive committee, comprises three commissions:

- The European Board of PRM (constituting the teaching commission)
- A Clinical Affairs Commission
- A professional practice commission

Throughout its history, the UEMS PRM Section has played a crucial role in harmonising PRM training and practice across Europe, promoting research and scientific exchange, and advocating for the speciality at the European level. Its work has significantly contributed to developing and recognising PRM as a distinct and vital medical speciality in Europe.



The UEMS PRM Section was presided over by dedicated, distinguished PRM physicians from various European countries. While Professor Freek Venema was the first president, Professor Mauro Zampolini now presides over the UEMS PRM Section.

THE MAIN ACTIVITIES

The UEMS PRM Section, the website of which is seen below, organises the medical specialty of PRM in Europe. The UEMS is a statutory organ under the responsibility of the European Commissioner of Health. It is the official body that the EU recognises. The UEMS PRM Section aims to promote the medical specialty of PRM in professional practice and to harmonise training in PRM at the European level through specialist training and continuing professional development.



www.uems-prm.eu

Board

The European Board of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine is a Working Group of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine Section of the Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes (U.E.M.S., European Union of Medical Specialists). It was founded by a separate statute in 1991.

Clinical Affairs

The Clinical Affairs Committee of the UEMS PRM Section focusses on Quality of Care in PRM practice. The Clinical Affairs Committee of the UEMS Section of PRM (CAC) was set up in 2001, at the suggestion of Prof. Veronika Fialka-Moser (Austria).

Professional Practice

The aim of the Professional Practice Committee is to ensure best standards in professional practice of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM) in prevention, clinical management and rehabilitation throughout Europe.

Applying for program accreditation for several years has been possible, and the quality of rehabilitation initiatives has improved.

The activities related to improving the quality of rehabilitation are shown in the figure below.

Specific actions promoted from UEMS-PRM Section



THE WHITEBOOK

One of the UEMS PRM Section's significant achievements is the creation of the White Book on PRM.



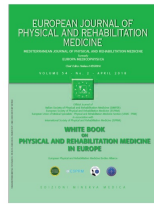
Significant achievements of the UEMS PRM Section

White Book on Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine in Europe

3rd Edition of the White Book in 2018

2nd Edition of the White Book

First White Book in 1989



THE WHITE BOOK ON PHYSICAL AND REHABILITATION MEDICINE IN EUROPE

- Classico 0. Introductions, Executive Summary, and Methodology
- Classico 1. Definitions and concepts of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine
- Classico 2. Why rehabilitation is needed by individual and society
- Classico 3. A primary medical specialty: the fundamentals of PRM
- Classico 4. History of the specialty, where PRM comes from
- Classico 5. The PRM organizations in Europe: structure and activities
- Classico 6. Knowledge and skills of PRM physicians
- Classico 7. The clinical field of competence: PRM in practice
- Classico 8. The PRM specialty in the healthcare system and society
- Classico 9. Education and continuous professional development: shaping the future of PRM
- Classico 10. Science and research in PRM: specifications and challenges
- Classico 11. Challenges and perspectives for the future of PRM

European Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine Bodies Alliance. White Book on Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM) in Europe. Eur J Phys Rehabil Med. 2018 Apr;54(2):129-131. <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpm/kqy001>

The first edition of the White Book (WB) of PRM in Europe aimed to integrate PRM into medical studies and harmonise specialist training across Europe. The second edition sought to establish PRM as a significant European medical specialty with high-quality, evidence-based practice. Both editions were well-received by health professionals and policymakers. Ten years after the second edition, European PRM bodies update the White Book to reflect the speciality's development and recent trends. In Europe, the White Book is now in its third edition.

It is possible to download it at
<https://www.prmwhitebook.eu/>

EVIDENCE-BASED POSITION PAPERS

The Evidence-based Position Papers (EBPPs) aim to define the role of PRM physicians in various health conditions.

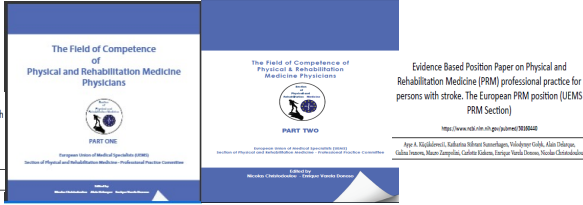


Evidence based position paper on physical and rehabilitation medicine (PRM) practice for people with spinal deformities during growth.
The European PRM position (UEMS PRM Section)

<https://www.uems.eu/en/our-activities/230207>

Milou Ngeles, Hani Omer, Galina Kalam, Lisavetta Enger, Irtiga Varda-Dimitri, Nicola Christodoulou

Evidence-Based Position Papers (EBPPs)



MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS MANAGEMENT AND THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL AND REHABILITATION MEDICINE PHYSICIANS. THE EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE BASED ON THE BEST EVIDENCE

Guest Editor: N. Christodoulou

EDITORIAL

EU/100/2008/000/2014/001

Eight papers from

UEMS-PRM Section Professional Practice Committee

N. CHRISTODOULOU¹, M. ZAMPOLINI², M. BERTHELANI³, S. NEGRINI⁴

Osteoarthritis. The role of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine Physicians. The European perspective based on the best evidence
A paper by the UEMS-PRM Section Professional Practice Committee

E. M. ILIENA¹, A. ORAL², A. KUCURDINCEVIC³, E. VARELA⁴, R. VALERO⁵, M. BERTHELANI⁶, N. CHRISTODOULOU⁷

Osteoporosis. The role of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine Physicians. The European perspective based on the best evidence
A paper by the UEMS-PRM Section Professional Practice Committee

A. ORAL¹, A. A. KUCURDINCEVIC², E. VARELA³, E. M. ILIENA⁴, R. VALERO⁵, M. BERTHELANI⁶, N. CHRISTODOULOU⁷

The UEMS PRM Section also produces strategic papers for strengthening rehabilitation.



Strategic Papers

Practice, science and governance in interaction:
European effort for the system-wide implementation
of the International Classification of Functioning,
Disability and Health (ICF) in Physical
and Rehabilitation Medicine

Gerold STUCKI^{1,2,3,4}, Mauro ZAMPOLINI⁵, Alysdan JUOCVICIUS⁶,
Stefano NEGRINI^{6,7}, Nicolas CHRISTODOULOU^{8,9,10}

European Framework of Rehabilitation Services Types:
the perspective of the Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine
Section and Board of the European Union of Medical Specialists

Gerold STUCKI^{1,2,3,4,5}, Mauro ZAMPOLINI^{6,7}, Melissa SELB^{8,4,*},
Maria G. CERAVOLO^{9,8}, Mark DELARGY^{10,11}, Enrique VARELA DONOSO^{12,13}, Carlotte KIEKENS^{14,15},
Nicolas CHRISTODOULOU^{16,17}, Study Group European Framework of Rehabilitation Service Types¹

The Individual Rehabilitation Project as the core
of person-centered rehabilitation: the Physical
and Rehabilitation Medicine Section and Board
of the European Union of Medical Specialists
Framework for Rehabilitation in Europe

Mauro ZAMPOLINI^{1,2}, Melissa SELB^{3,3}, Paolo BOLDRINI⁴, Catarina A. BRANCO⁵,
Sotirios GOLYK^{6,7}, Xianlei HU⁸, Carlotte KIEKENS⁹, Stefano NEGRINI^{10,11},
Anda NULLE¹², Aydan ORAL¹³, Markos SGANTZOS¹⁴, Aleksei SHMONIN¹⁵, Iuly TREGER^{16,17},
Gerold STUCKI^{2,3,18}, UEMS-PRM Section and Board¹

The standards and tools of the European Union of Medical
Specialists Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine Section
and Board for rehabilitation management and care:
an evidence brief for rehabilitation practitioners

Melissa SELB^{1,2,3,4}, Mauro ZAMPOLINI⁵, Nikolaos BAROTSI⁶, Aydan ORAL⁶,
Gerold STUCKI^{1,2,3,7}, on behalf of the UEMS-PRM Section and Board¹

COLLABORATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The collaboration includes other major PRM bodies and the WHO within the Rehabilitation 2030 initiative, supported by the World Health Organization Resolution on Strengthening



Rehabilitation and the World Rehabilitation Alliance with advocacy activities.

The UEMS PRM Section collaborates with Cochrane Rehabilitation to strengthen the evidence supporting rehabilitation practices. This partnership aims to improve the quality and reliability of research in the field, ensuring rehabilitation interventions are based on robust scientific evidence.

Collaboration with the European Disability Forum is in progress.

CONCLUSION

The UEMS PRM Section and other European bodies have been instrumental in shaping the discipline. Their tireless efforts have led to harmonised training standards, evidence-based practices, and improved European patient care. Establishing standardised curricula, the European Board Examination and practice guidelines have elevated the quality and consistency of PRM throughout the region.

We celebrate not just an organisation but a movement that has redefined rehabilitation medicine. The dedication of numerous professionals and organisations has propelled PRM from a fledgling field to an indispensable component of modern healthcare.

Looking ahead, PRM faces both challenges and opportunities. An ageing population, technological advancements, and the need for more equitable access to rehabilitation services will shape the field's future. The ongoing collaboration between European PRM bodies, including partnerships with organisations like Cochrane Rehabilitation, WHO, and EDF, will be crucial.

The progress of the past 50 years inspires and provides a foundation for future innovations. As we move forward, the commitment to evidence-based practice, interdisciplinary collaboration, and patient-centred care will continue to drive PRM's evolution, ensuring its vital role in improving the lives of individuals with disabilities and chronic conditions across Europe.

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