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MEDIA RELEASE
For Immediate Release



Canadian Association
Physiotherapy Association
Association canadienne de
physiothérapie

Response to landmark study of osteoarthritis of the knee: The health care system needs to respond and take advantage of lower cost interventions like physiotherapy

Toronto, September 11, 2008 – The Canadian Physiotherapy Association welcomes the results of a randomized controlled study showing that patient focused physiotherapy treatment yields the same result as arthroscopic surgery for osteoarthritis (OA) of the knee. The results published today in the *New England Journal of Medicine* offer compelling reasons to re-examine standard care.¹ “When the less expensive, hands-on care of the physiotherapist is proven equally effective to arthroscopic surgery, we expect the health system to take notice and respond”, says Michael Brennan, Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA).

“Here’s an excellent example of the potential for physiotherapy to contribute to the health, well-being and mobility of Canadians while also reducing surgical wait times for necessary procedures”, adds CPA President Michel Landry BSc (PT), PhD. “As autonomous primary health care professionals, physiotherapists are ideally positioned to help improve the quality of life for people with knee OA, in conjunction with the pharmacological intervention provided by family physicians”.

According to Rob Werstine HBA, BSc PT, Dip Manip, Dip Sport, FCAMT, a physiotherapist at the Fowler-Kennedy Sport Medicine Clinic and CPA Board of Director Member, “This study confirms some of the observational data that we have seen over the decades where by we see patients one to two years following knee arthroscopy for a ‘clean-up’.”

Concurrently, one of the most visible problems in the Canadian health care environment is wait list times for orthopaedic problems. “Either people have to wait months to get an appointment with an orthopaedic surgeon or they have to wait months for a surgery date,” says Werstine. “This study confirms that people with knee OA should consider seeking out the care of a physiotherapist”.

The Canadian Physiotherapy Association supports wider use of physiotherapist services in the management of OA of the knee and encourages all ministries of health to use physiotherapy more often to improve health outcomes at reduced cost versus standard care.

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About CPA

The Canadian Physiotherapy Association is the national voluntary professional association, representing more than 10,000 members across the country. CPA's mission is to provide leadership and direction to the physiotherapy profession, foster excellence in practice, education and research, and promote high standards of health in Canada. Additional information can be found on our website.

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¹ Kirkley A et al. A randomized trial of arthroscopic surgery for osteoarthritis of the knee. NEJM. 2008;359:1097-1107.