

History of Physiotherapy Foundation

Physiotherapy in perspective, 50 years past - present.



Feminization in physiotherapy?

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Introduction

Only one in five participants in health and wellness training is male.¹

This is the conclusion of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) with regard to educational participation in 2017-2018.¹ If we zoom in on the figures from Statistics Netherlands, 34% of the students at the Faculty of Medicine are male and at HBO this is percentage at 30%.¹ In Medical Contact it is noted that this percentage is still relatively high because the tendency is that the number of women working in care continues to increase compared to men.¹ In 2017-2018 became less and less men educated in this sector and in nursing education participation is only 10%.¹

This trend was also noted by the National Study Choice Survey (NSKO), which showed that fewer and fewer male VWO students

to pursue training in health care. Many male students disappear en masse to technical universities.² This development in secondary education is regretted by the Royal Dutch Medicine Society (KNMG), where Marlies de Rond, education policy advisor, indicates that 'it is precisely those technical people'

are also desperately needed in health care and in medicine in particular.²

What about feminization in physiotherapy?

Physiotherapy contrasts with these figures from Statistics Netherlands with regard to this ratio between men/women in health care professions.

The Nivel provides an overview of 2003-2012 showing that there is a balanced distribution between men and women in the extramural setting.³

Tabel 1: Aantal extramuraal werkzame fysiotherapeuten naar geslacht, op 1 januari

	Mannen		Vrouwen		Totaal	
	abs	%	abs	%	abs	%
2003	6.702	49,4	6.872	50,6	13.574	100,0
2005	6.777	48,8	7.099	51,2	13.876	100,0
2008	7.198	46,4	8.317	53,6	15.515	100,0
2010	7.563	45,2	9.180	54,8	16.743	100,0
2012	7.885	44,3	9.917	55,7	17.802	100,0

In 2017-18, an equal number of men and women followed physiotherapist training.¹ If we look back in time to, for example, the 1970s, not much has changed with regard to the male-female distribution. The former

study programs applied a strict selection in which the male/female ratio was artificially set at fifty-fifty. After all, the profession of physiotherapy is not an outspoken male or female profession and the patient population neither. At least that's how it was reasoned at the time. The image that did exist among some was that you had to be physically strong to be a physiotherapist, but that has never been an explicit selection requirement, although some courses had a physical examination and also

a physical ability test to be admitted.

If we currently look at the number of BIG-registered physiotherapists working in healthcare, we only see an even distribution between men and women at age 55 and over.

Here we see a discrepancy between an equal number of students (male: female ratio) in the courses and the number of physiotherapists who participate in the labor process (in 2017). Apparently more women go than men get started with a diploma in physiotherapy in their pocket. We cannot find out the reason for this. They may move on to further education.

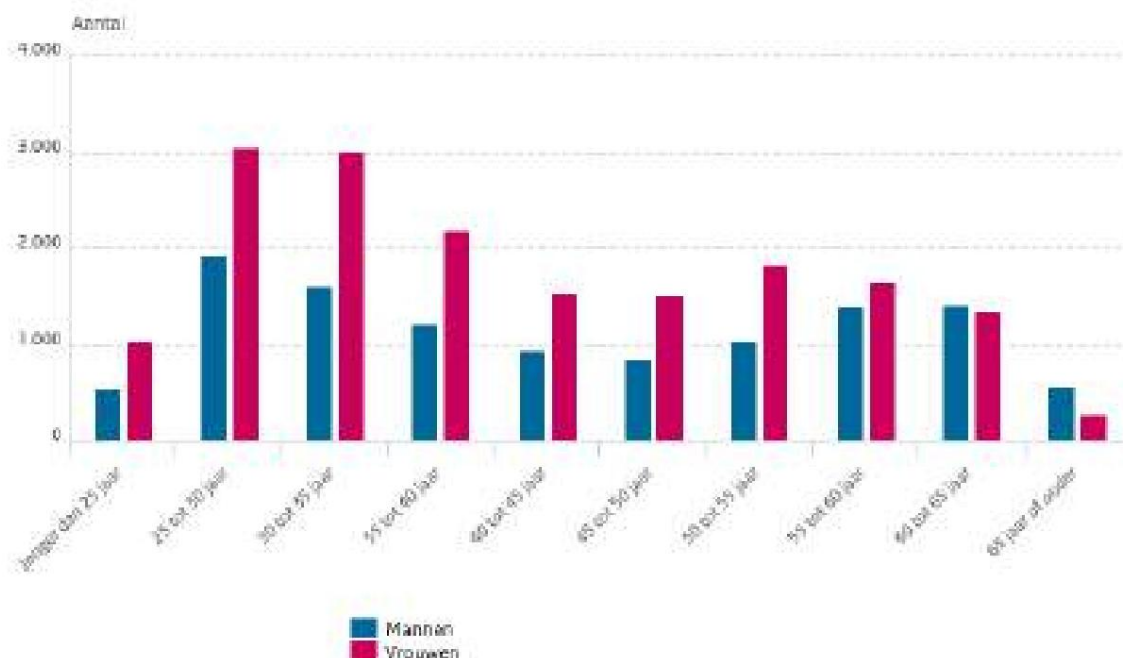


Figure from 2017 (last update) of the number of working physiotherapists. Key figures from the “State of Public Health Care 2017”. A total of 28,940 BIG-registered physiotherapists working in 2017.

The fact that in the past in remedial gymnastics mainly names of men appeared in the literature and/or descriptions has more to do with the fact that around 1900 few women took part in the labor process and that women often had to overcome a lot of resistance if they nevertheless chose a profession. as a health gymnast. In this context, we highlight an example of a remarkable gymnastics teacher, remedial gymnast and physiotherapist, Jeanne Muller-Maas, who started her career around 1900, against all the views of the time.

Like what Jeanne Muller-Vermaas?

Jeanne Muller was a daughter of a pastor's family and wanted to be a gymnastics teacher from an early age.⁵ This was against the sore leg of her parents because this was unheard of in those years.

Jeanne Muller managed to go against the grain

swimming and was trained to gymnastics teacher in Utrecht.⁵

In 1900 she managed to get an appointment at the Hogere Burgerschool (HBS) in Hilversum and she also worked at various schools (Godelindeschool and girls' boarding school Hill House).⁵

In 1904, Jeanne Muller decides to take further training in Swedish gymnastics (the predecessor of healing gymnastics). She also visits the school of August Abrahamson (the Swedish educational sloyd) in Nääs.⁵ Jeanne Muller also made a career in sports and participated in the Olympic Games in Antwerp in 1920 and at the time worked in Brussels at the “Institut de Gymnastique medicale” of Leon duPont⁵.

In 1921 she comes to work at the “Institute for Remedial Gymnastics and Massage” of Jeanne Vermaas and marries

in 1926 marries the brother of colleague Vermaas.5

Further development into a remedial gymnast.

The interest in further training in remedial gymnastics had been aroused earlier and in 1932 Muller received the official diploma of competence for remedial gymnastics and massage.5



While many people are already thinking about retirement after 32 years of working in care, Jeanne Muller starts his career as a remedial gymnast. She then goes to school in physical therapy and eventually becomes a physiotherapist. Jeanne built up a flourishing practice and visited patients at home.

Diploma of Competence for Remedial Gymnastics and Massage from Jeanne Muller (left). Collection SGF.

In 1954, at the age of 80, she received a moped from patients and referring doctors as a gift, because her old moped was worn out.5 This was so that she could continue to visit her patients at home. No for Jeanne Muller

age to quit. We couldn't find out how many mopeds she has worn after her 80th , but that she continued to visit patients with her moped until she was 88 and until she was 98 has continued to work.



Practice and living space of Jeanne Muller. Collection SGF



Practice room of Jeanne Muller: with equipment for traction (cervical), exercise equipment, UKG with Faraday cage, electrotherapy and a Vibrax 3D. Collection SGF.

In 1973 there were major articles in the Gooi en Eemlander (24 May) and the Telegraaf about the Physiotherapist who was still practicing her profession at the age of 98.4

At the last moment in her life she was knighted in the order of Oranje Nassau

where Jeanne jokingly said to the mayor: "just in time otherwise you could have pinned that medal on the coffin". She kept her humor and light-heartedness until she was 98.3



Jeanne Muller at work as a physiotherapist.



The practice of Jeanne Muller-Vermaas where she worked until she was 98 (left). Collection SGF.

Feminization in physiotherapy?

In fact, we can say that the perception (male or female) of a healthcare profession does not seem to hold true for physiotherapy for the time being. At the beginning of 1900, remedial gymnastics was a profession that was mainly practiced by men, but more specifically based on the classic division of roles between men and women at that time. We recognize the enormous enthusiasm of Jeanne Muller Vermaas in the profession as a physiotherapist and she has been followed by many

female therapists. It's about the inner drive to want to work in healthcare, in this case physiotherapy.

The concern for the future, expressed by the authoritative KNMG, about the predicted exodus of men from health care training is not yet recognized for the profession of physiotherapy, although we do see a greater participation of women in the work process after physiotherapy training.

References

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Imagery

History of physiotherapy foundation (SGF). Meeting point for Medical History in the Netherlands (TMGN) Foksdiep 8 Urk.

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