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## 2011 OPEN FORUM Abstracts

### A VALID ACADEMIC PATH TO PROMOTE RESPIRATORY PHYSIOTHERAPY.

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**BACKGROUND** A one-year post-graduate Master in Physiotherapy and Pulmonary Rehabilitation has been offered within the University of Milan Medical School in collaboration with Associazione Italiana Riabilitatori dell'Insufficienza Respiratoria (ARIR). The aim is to cover a gap in Italian Physiotherapy academic curricula offering a course with theoretical and practical teaching that make students capable of using different techniques and procedures in respiratory physiotherapy. After the recognition by the International Education Recognition System (IERS), ARIR wanted to investigate if and how this course has affected students' attitude and their profession. **METHODS** A structured questionnaire made up of 15 multiple-choices items (8 on perceived quality of education and 7 on professional change) was sent by email to all physiotherapists who graduated in the previous four editions of the Master. One month was given for completion. Age, gender, year of degree and year of Master were considered as

background variables. RESULTS We had a 78% response rate with 57 out of 73 physiotherapists sending the questionnaire back. Mean age was 37 years (23-60) and women were the majority (78%). Forty-two students (74%) worked in the respiratory field at the time of application but only 15 (36%) dealt with respiratory patients only. Expectations were completely met at the end of Master for 71% of physiotherapists. 96% reported greater professional and clinical skills after the master with a 67% saying working team relationship has improved. 28% improved their job position thanks to the master degree and physiotherapy working in the respiratory field increased by 22%. CONCLUSIONS This course seems to meet students expectations and offer a solid knowledge to better work within the field of respiratory physiotherapy. It is also a way to promote the profession of respiratory physiotherapy in Italy. Sponsored Research - None

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