Rehabilitation in primary health care – why is it important?
Global and demographic trends indicate an increasing need for rehabilitation as a result of population ageing, increasing prevalence in noncommunicable diseases and ongoing consequences of conflict and injury. However, in many parts of the world this need is largely unmet and may grow if there is no significant action taken. In some low- and middle-income countries it is estimated that more than 50% of individuals do not have access to the rehabilitation services they require.\(^1\)

A key strategy to address this unmet need is to make rehabilitation available in Primary Health Care (PHC).\(^2\) When rehabilitation is integrated into PHC, services are brought closer to people’s homes, making them more accessible and affordable. Rehabilitation can be integrated into PHC through multiple mechanisms, such as increasing the rehabilitation workforce at this level and through utilising the existing PHC workforce to deliver rehabilitation.

What is the Basic Rehabilitation Package?
The World Health Organization (WHO) Basic Rehabilitation Package (BRP) will be a resource that outlines a limited set of prioritised interventions for rehabilitation that can be delivered in PHC. It does this by providing information on low-cost, high-impact and evidence-based interventions for rehabilitation that can be easily, safely and effectively delivered by existing workforce in PHC and low-resource settings. It is primarily a guide for health planners as it offers a prioritised list of interventions for rehabilitation and includes the associated resources (e.g. equipment, assistive products and consumables) that are required to deliver these interventions.

What is the Basic Rehabilitation Package Clinical Resource?
The Basic Rehabilitation Package Clinical Resource is the clinical management tool of the BRP. It will support existing primary healthcare workers including doctors and nurses to provide the interventions for rehabilitation particularly where rehabilitation workforce is not available or has limited capacity. The resource will guide clinical decision-making on the identification of rehabilitation needs and provision of appropriate interventions, it will utilise a decision-tree (algorithm) structure, similar to that utilised by other WHO products, such as WHO PEN Package\(^3\) and mhGAP.\(^4\) The resource supports rehabilitation task-sharing approaches, enabling existing PHC workforce to be trained in the rehabilitation “pathways” (e.g. mobility, communication, self-care), so that they can screen and assess for functioning difficulties and subsequently provide a basic set of interventions.

Why do we need a Basic Rehabilitation Package Clinical Resource?
While having rehabilitation workers (e.g. physiotherapists, occupational therapists, rehabilitation medicine physicians and speech and language therapists) delivering rehabilitation care in PHC will increase access, in resource constrained environments a large expansion of rehabilitation workers at this level is often not feasible. Hence, provision of a limited set of prioritised rehabilitation interventions delivered by existing PHC workers (i.e. nurses and doctors) with adequate clinical guidance and training is needed. This approach will support access to rehabilitation in two ways, one, by delivering a limited set of rehabilitation care by existing PHC workers at this level, and two, by increasing the capacity of existing PHC workers to identify rehabilitation needs and refer to rehabilitation services whether at the level of PHC or other levels of care.

How will the Basic Rehabilitation Package Clinical Resource be used?
The Basic Rehabilitation Package Clinical Resource will be used by existing health workers to guide clinical decision-making, enabling them to identify rehabilitation needs and provide basic rehabilitation interventions in PHC and low-resource settings. The resource includes a training package which supports blended learning, using both online and face to face learning materials. The resource will also include an implementation guide that outlines a method for adoption and utilization within a setting, this will be accompanied by the BRP which includes the detailed planning information.
How will the Basic Rehabilitation Package Clinical Resource be developed?
The Basic Rehabilitation Package Clinical Resource will be developed through a highly collaborative process, involving the two phases outlined below (See Figure 1).

Phase One
This has already been completed and included the identification of priority rehabilitation interventions for task sharing outlined in Steps 1–5 of Figure 1 below. A Technical Working Group of both rehabilitation and non-rehabilitation workers with experience working in PHC and low resource settings supported this phase.

Phase Two
This will involve the development of the clinical resource and accompanying training materials as shown in the steps below:

**STEP 6** Draft prototype of clinical resource
**STEP 7** Preliminary pilot test and review of prototype
**STEP 8** Draft content for remaining modules of clinical resource
**STEP 9** Develop implementation guide for clinical resource, including with expert review
**STEP 10** Pilot version 1 of the clinical resource
**STEP 11** Finalization, production and launch of the clinical resource

Figure 1: Method to develop the Basic Rehabilitation Package Clinical Resource

| Phase One | 1. Select health conditions | 2. Extract evidence-based interventions from existing WHO resources | 3. Pre-selection of priority interventions | 4. Identify final interventions | 5. Identify resource requirements |
| PHASE 1 Identification of Priority Interventions for Task Sharing | WHO RP | WHO RP | WHO RP | TWG | TWG |
| PHASE 2 Development of Clinical Resource and accompanying training materials | | | | |
| WHO RP | WHO RP | WHO RP/TWG | WHO RP/ERG | WHO RP | WHO RP |

*WHO RP = World Health Organization Rehabilitation Programme; TWG = Technical Working Group; ERG = Expert Review Group

Who will be involved in the development of the Basic Rehabilitation Package Clinical Resource?
The WHO Rehabilitation Programme will lead the development of the Basic Rehabilitation Package Clinical Resource. A Technical Working Group and Expert Review Group will be made up of rehabilitation and non-rehabilitation workforce who have experience providing rehabilitation in PHC and low-resource settings and are representatives of different geographical and professional backgrounds.

When will the Basic Rehabilitation Package Clinical Resource be available for use?
The Basic Rehabilitation Package is expected to be launched in June 2023.

Reference