

Western Pacific Regional Framework on Rehabilitation



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FOREWORD

Rehabilitation is an essential health strategy for optimizing and maintaining the health and well-being of all people who experience illness, injury or impairment. Rehabilitation services are often crucial for people living longer with chronic disease and impairment who seek to maintain their quality of life, care for themselves and participate in their communities.

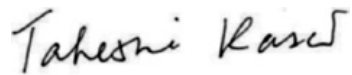
In the World Health Organization (WHO) Western Pacific Region, ageing populations and other health challenges in countries are likely to drive the demand for rehabilitation services skyward in the coming years. The Region is ageing rapidly: one in four people will be 60 years of age or older by 2050. And some health trends are moving in the wrong direction. Despite strengthened preventive efforts, noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and related disabilities continue to rise. From 2006 to 2016, strokes increased by more than 50% in the Region, cardiovascular disease by 35%, respiratory disease by 16% and diabetes by more than 13%.

In the face of growing demand for rehabilitation services, coverage is sporadic and quality inconsistent in the Region. Health systems are often overly focused on prevention and curative treatment services provided on an episodic basis, with little regard for service needs, including rehabilitation.

In many countries, inadequate rehabilitation services limit people's ability to recover following treatment, making it difficult to resume school or work and look after themselves and their families. This shortfall often causes financial hardship by shifting the burden of rehabilitation to families and individuals. These issues can be addressed by including rehabilitation services in the continuum of care and strengthening services as part of universal health coverage. This approach can help millions recover from injury or illness, manage long-term disease or disability, and age with health and dignity.

The *Western Pacific Regional Framework on Rehabilitation* utilizes this approach, offering countries options to strengthen rehabilitation within their own contexts. Member States endorsed the Framework during the 69th session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in October 2018. In line with the Framework, WHO will work with countries to help strengthen service delivery, governance, workforce capacity and information on rehabilitation, fostering collaboration and the sharing of best practices among countries in the Region. Accelerating progress towards universal health coverage, including integrated rehabilitation services, is critical.

Working together, Member States, WHO and other development partners can help ensure the highest attainable level of health and well-being for all of the nearly 1.9 billion people in the 37 countries and areas of the Western Pacific Region.



Takeshi Kasai, MD, Ph.D.
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