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Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

Updated: January 20, 2004.

Definition

Physical medicine and rehabilitation, also referred to as physiatry or rehabilitation medicine, is a branch of medicine concerned with evaluation and treatment of, and coordination of care for, persons with musculoskeletal injuries, pain syndromes, and/or other physical or cognitive impairments or disabilities. The primary focus is on maximal restoration of physical and psychological function, and on alleviation of pain (adapted from definitions by the [American Board of Medical Specialties](#) and the [American Board of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation](#)).

Scope and emphasis

NLM focuses on medical evaluation, treatment and management of persons with impairments and disabilities. The Library selectively collects works on social, political, legal and cultural aspects of disability, focusing on works that emphasize public health issues, those that are essential to providing a context for evaluation and treatment, and those likely to be of importance to the historical record.

Social and vocational rehabilitation literature is more selectively acquired, and only when the primary intended audience is health professionals.