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Editorial

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The archives conversation: Listening to the voices shaping physical and rehabilitation medicine

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Although Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM) is a global specialty, it is not practiced in a single global context. The priorities, resources, models of care, workforce, research capacity, and expectations of rehabilitation differ substantially across countries and healthcare systems. Research that addresses research questions, interventions, and outcomes in the context of different countries and populations is lacking.

The *Archives of ISPRM* is pleased to introduce **The Archives Conversation**, a new recurring editorial feature beginning in 2027. In each issue of the journal, we will invite a recognized PRM expert to engage in a conversation of approximately 8 to 10 questions. The questions will be tailored to the expertise and geographical context of the PRM expert, and leverage their professional journey, challenges, lessons learned, and outlook on the future of PRM. A particular emphasis will be placed on advice for trainees, early-career professionals, and the next generation of researchers and clinicians.

This approach of interviews and qualitative conversations has been previously used to understand professional experiences, clinical perspectives, and differences in practice.[1,2] International qualitative work has demonstrated the value of deliberately seeking perspectives from rehabilitation professionals working across high-, middle-, and low-income settings.[3]

The Archives Conversation has purpose which is distinct from a conventional qualitative research study. It is not intended to generate research data or establish consensus. Rather, it seeks to create a scholarly record of professional experience and reflection. This is particularly relevant at a time when rehabilitation is increasingly recognized as an essential component of healthcare systems. The World Health Organization (WHO) Rehabilitation 2030 initiative has emphasized the need for stronger rehabilitation leadership, workforce development, research capacity, health-system integration, and international partnerships.[4] To address these challenges, local context, experience, and leadership is essential.

The International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM) serves as the global agency for PRM and has a humanitarian,

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professional, and scientific mandate.[5] Its strength lies in the breadth of its international community. The Archives Conversation will seek to reflect that breadth. Experts will be selected to represent different geographic regions, clinical and research disciplines, career trajectories, healthcare systems, and levels of available resources. We will deliberately seek voices from high-income countries alongside those from middle-income and resource-constrained settings. **The Archives Conversation** will be forward-looking. Each interview will include questions addressing emerging priorities, research opportunities, education, mentorship, and the future direction of PRM. We believe that these discussions will provide practical guidance to those beginning their careers while encouraging established professionals to reflect on how the field should evolve.

This diversity matters. A rehabilitation intervention or service model that is feasible in one healthcare system may be unrealistic in another.[6] Conversely, innovative approaches developed in resource-constrained environments may offer valuable lessons for healthcare systems with substantially greater resources.[7] Understanding these differences can enrich our collective thinking about what constitutes effective, equitable, and contextually appropriate rehabilitation.

There is also an archival dimension to the initiative. *Archives of ISPRM* is a new journal, established in 2026. As we build the journal, we also have an opportunity to document the development of contemporary PRM from its earliest years. Over time, these conversations may become more than individual profiles. Collectively, they will inform the evolution of our specialty that has been shaped by different generations, regions, disciplines, and healthcare systems.

We welcome suggestions from the ISPRM community for individuals whose experiences, expertise, and perspectives will enrich this series. In summary, **the Archives Conversation** will focus on one expert, ten questions, and a global perspective on the past, present, and future of rehabilitation medicine.

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Data Availability

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The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI) tools were not used, or were used solely for language editing, and had no role in data analysis, interpretation, or the formulation of conclusions. All scientific content, data interpretation, and conclusions are the sole responsibility of the authors. The authors further confirm that AI tools were not used to generate, fabricate, or 'hallucinate' references, and that all references have been carefully verified for accuracy.

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