

Thesis title: Developing an evidence-based recommendation to communicate physical activity knowledge for disabled adults with various health statuses in Saudi Arabia.

Supervisors: Prof. Brett Smith, Prof. Cassandra Phoenix

1. What is your current role, and what does your work involve?

I am currently an Assistant Professor of Disability Rehabilitation and Physiotherapy at Najran University, Saudi Arabia. My role involves teaching undergraduate physiotherapy students, supervising research projects, conducting research in rehabilitation and disability, and contributing to academic leadership and quality assurance activities within the university.

Beyond my academic responsibilities, I am actively involved in initiatives that support people with disabilities and promote inclusive health and wellbeing. I work with disability organizations and community groups to increase awareness of the benefits of physical activity and to support greater participation and inclusion for people with disabilities across Saudi Arabia.

2. How did your PhD help prepare you for this role?

My PhD at Durham University provided excellent preparation for my academic career. Through conducting a large mixed-methods study on physical activity communication for disabled adults in Saudi Arabia, I developed advanced skills in research design, qualitative and quantitative data analysis, project management, academic writing, and stakeholder engagement.

The PhD also strengthened my confidence, leadership, critical thinking, and communication abilities. Working with disabled adults, healthcare professionals, and community organizations helped me understand how research can address real-world challenges and improve health outcomes. These experiences prepared me to teach future physiotherapists, supervise research projects, and contribute to the development of evidence-based rehabilitation practice in Saudi Arabia.

3. What knowledge or skills from your PhD do you use most in your work today?

The skills I use most frequently are research design, critical appraisal of evidence, qualitative and quantitative research methods, academic writing, and project management. My PhD also enhanced my ability to communicate effectively with diverse groups and to translate research findings into practical recommendations that can improve rehabilitation services.

A particularly valuable area of expertise I gained was understanding how to communicate and promote physical activity among people with disabilities. I continue to apply this knowledge in my teaching, research, and community engagement activities. The critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability developed during my PhD help me bridge the gap between research, education, and real-world practice.

4. What advice would you give to current PhD students as they think about their future careers?

My advice to current PhD students is to view the PhD as more than a research degree. It is an opportunity to develop valuable skills in critical thinking, communication, leadership, project management, and collaboration. I encourage PhD students to build professional networks, seek opportunities beyond their immediate research area, and focus on work that has meaningful real-world impact.

Most importantly, be resilient and patient with yourself. Challenges are a normal part of the PhD journey and often provide the greatest opportunities for personal and professional growth.