



ANNUAL REPORT

2015



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2015 has been another busy year for the Council as the AHPC continued to work diligently to improve its processes and manage the increasing number of registered allied health professionals which rose to 2,991 registrants by the end of 2015. This report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the Council as it carries out its role of protecting the health and safety of the public through the Allied Health Professions Act.

We also welcomed Mr Abhimanyau Pal, Executive Director of SPD, who was appointed to the Council on 15 March 2015.

AHPC's new Professional Registration System (PRS) was also launched in 2015 with electronic submissions replacing the previous manual registration. We are thankful that this new computerised system has allowed the Council to streamline processes and serve our Allied Health Professionals and their employing institutions better.

I would like to thank the Council staff and our very hardworking colleagues who have served on various AHPC Committees, for their dedication and diligence during the year. Without their support, the Council's work and activities would not have been so effectively carried out. We will continue to strive to improve the regulation processes and to protect the health and safety of the public.

Dr Lau Hong Choon
President
Allied Health Professions Council

INTRODUCTION

The Allied Health Professions Council was formed on 8 April 2013 and the implementation of the Allied Health Professions (AHP) Act commenced on 15 April 2013 with the mass registration of Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Speech-Language Therapists.

The Council maintains the Registers of Allied Health Professionals and renews practising certificates, issues certificates of good standing and regulates the conduct and practice of registered allied health professionals. The Council specifies pre-registration requisites, approves pre-registration training centres and directs continuing education.

The Council also investigates into any complaints against a registered allied health professions. Registrants found guilty of professional misconduct may be reprimanded, suspended or removed from the Register.

The Annual Report 2015 documents the activities and registration statistics as at 31 December 2015.

ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL MEMBERS

President (Representative for Director, Medical Service)	Dr Lau Hong Choon
Registrar	Ms Elaine Teo
Representative for Director-General of Education	Ms Phyllis Chua Suan Gek
Member	Mr Abdul Rashid Jailani
Member	A/Prof Alan Wong Wai Pong
Member	Ms Florence Cheong
Member	Mr Gary Tan Theng Tiak
Member	Ms Jacqueline Phang Win Ling
Member	Mr Lim Hua Beng
Member	Ms Melissa Chua Hui Ling
Member	Ms Susan Niam
Member	Mr Abhimanyau Pal (From 15 March 2015)

REGISTRATION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS, PHYSIOTHERAPISTS & SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPISTS

The registration of Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Speech-Language Therapists commenced on 15 April 2013 with a 1-year grace period till 14 April 2014 for registration. Following the grace period, those who wish to practice had to apply for registration with the Council before they could start practising.

The registration categories for the Allied Health Professions Council are similar to other healthcare professional boards in Singapore where therapists are registered with full, conditional or temporary registration depending on their qualifications and practice experience in Singapore. Restricted registration was introduced to grandfather existing foreign therapists whose qualifications were not found on the Council's List of Recognised Qualifications, thus enabling them to continue practising in their existing roles without supervision under conditional registration.

The end of the grace period marked the close of restricted registration. Most of the allied health professionals registered in 2015 were granted either conditional or full registration.

At the end 2015, the Council had registered 2,991 therapists consisting of 967 Occupational Therapists (OT), 1,550 Physiotherapists (PT) and 474 Speech-Language Therapists (SLT).

DEMOGRAPHICS:

TOTAL NUMBER OF REGISTERED ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Physiotherapists continue to make up the majority of registered allied health professionals, followed by occupational therapists and speech-language therapists.

Chart 1. Total number of registered therapists as at 31 December 2015



REGISTRATION TYPE

As at 31 December 2015, there was an increase of approximately 10% of registered occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech-language therapists. The total number of registered allied health professionals under full, conditional and temporary registration in Singapore was 2,991.

By the end of 2015, 84% of registered occupational therapists, 75% of registered physiotherapists and 72% of speech-language therapists were fully registered. 16% of registered occupational therapists and 20% of registered physiotherapists and speech-language therapists were conditionally registered. The majority of the therapists under Conditional registration were newly qualified practitioners.

Table 1. Number and Types of Registrants by Profession as at 31 December 2015

	2014	2015
Occupational Therapy		
Full Registration	732	814
Restricted Registration	3	3
Conditional Registration	170	150
Temporary Registration	0	0
TOTAL	905	967
Physiotherapy		
Full Registration	1,066	1,167
Restricted Registration	56	57
Conditional Registration	272	325
Temporary Registration	0	1 ¹
TOTAL	1,394	1,550
Speech-Language Therapy		
Full Registration	309	342
Restricted Registration	2	3
Conditional Registration	88	128
Temporary Registration	1	1 ¹
TOTAL	400	474

¹ Only 1 physiotherapist and 1 speech-language therapist were under temporary registration as at 31 December 2015.

The AHPC processed a number of applications for temporary registration throughout 2015. These registrants included visiting experts who conducted training workshops and national therapy support teams for athletes taking part in the South East Asian Games and ASEAN Paralympic games. Their registration period lasted only for the duration of the events.

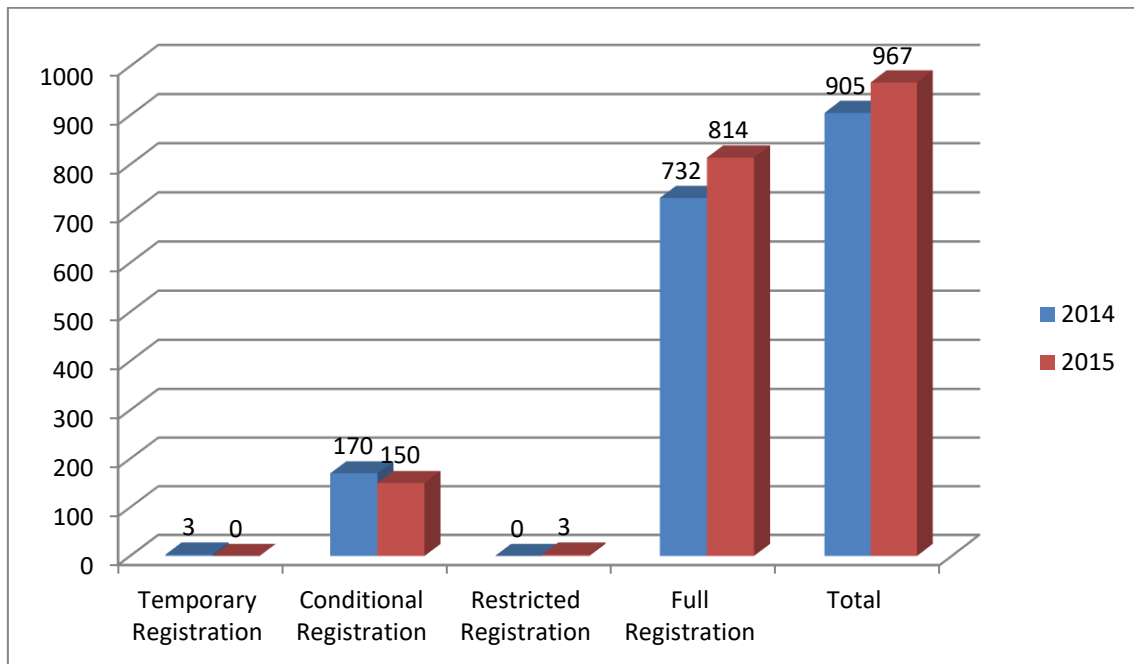
Table 2. Total Number of Temporary Registrants in 2015

Types of Registration	OT	PT	SLT	TOTAL
Temporary Registration	5	54	4	63

I. OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

The total number of registered occupational therapists increased from 908 to 967. The AHPC saw a 10% increase in fully registered occupational therapists while those under conditional registration decreased by approximately 12% as those granted conditional registration during the grace period successfully transitioned to full registration.

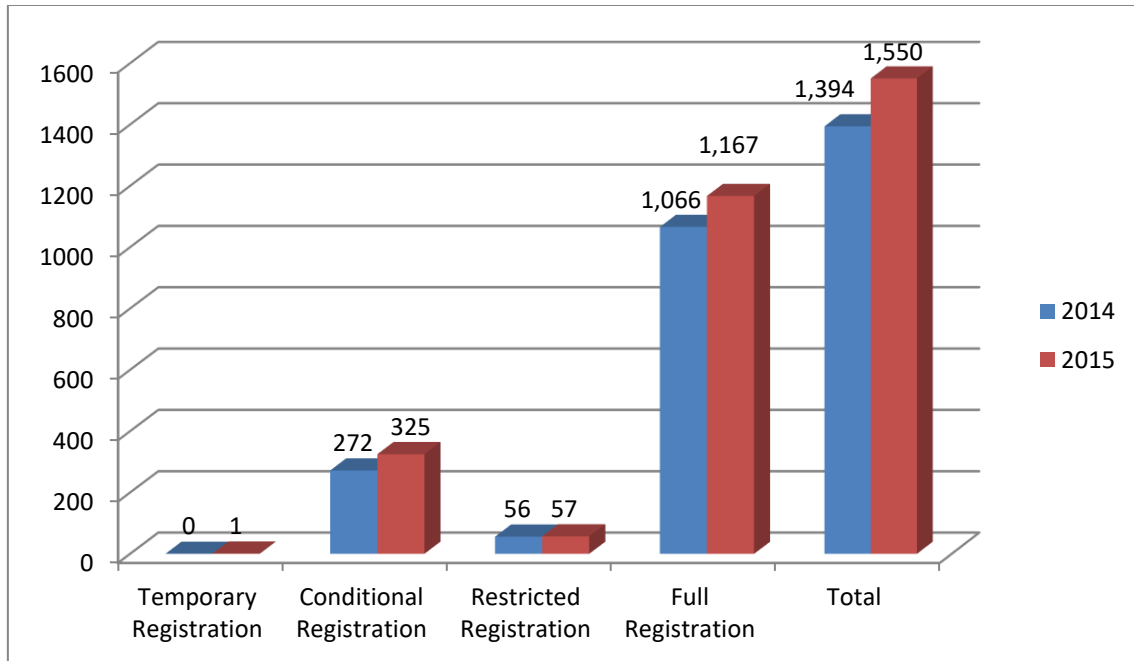
Chart 2a. Number of Occupational Therapists by Registration Type (Years 2014 to 2015)



II. PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

The total number of registered physiotherapists increased from 1,399 to 1,550. The AHPC saw an increase in both conditionally and fully registered physiotherapists by 16% and 10% respectively.

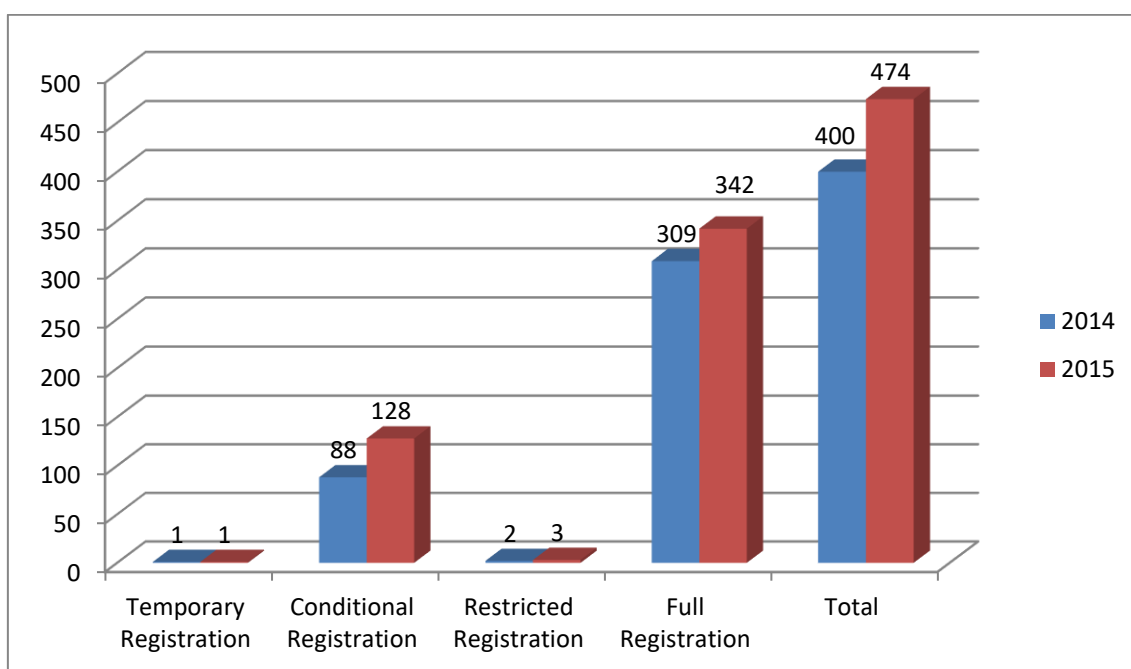
Chart 2b. Number of Physiotherapists by Registration Type (Years 2014 to 2015)



III. SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPISTS

The total number of registered speech-language therapists increased from 400 to 474. The AHPC saw an increase in both conditionally and fully registered speech-language therapists by 32% and 11% respectively. This increase was due to applications for registration received from graduates of the National University of Singapore.

Chart 2c. Number of Speech-Language Therapists by Registration Type (Years 2014 to 2015)



SECTOR DISTRIBUTION

Most allied health professionals practise in public healthcare institutions. Voluntary welfare organisations and community hospitals employ the second highest number of occupational therapists while the private sector has the second highest number of physiotherapists and speech-language therapists.

Table 3. Sector Distribution by Profession as at 31 December 2015

Sectors of Employment	Sector Distribution			Total
	OT	PT	SLT	
Public Healthcare Sector (Restructured Hospitals and Institutions, Polyclinics)	431	792	202	1,425
Community Hospitals	112	136	14	262
VWOs Services	206	155	99	460
Private Hospitals/Clinics/Centres/Schools	134	339	132	605
Educational Institutions	17	18	2	37
Others (Government, Statutory Boards, Government-linked Agencies)	27	44	7	78
Unemployed/ Unknown	40	66	18	124

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF REGISTERED THERAPISTS

Majority of registered therapists are under full time employment, with an average of 9% of registered therapists of each profession under part-time employment.

Table 4. Employment Status of Registered Therapists as at 31 December 2015

Activities	OT	PT	SLT	Total
Full Time	843 (87.2%)	1,361 (87.8%)	396 (83.5%)	2,600 (86.9%)
Part Time	84 (8.7%)	123 (7.9%)	60 (12.7%)	267 (8.9%)
Unemployed/ Unknown	40 (4.1%)	66 (4.3%)	18 (3.8%)	124 (4.2%)
Total	967 (100.0%)	1,550 (100%)	474 (100.0%)	2,991¹ (100.0%)

¹ The figure excludes temporary registered visiting experts.

COUNTRY/AREA OF BASIC QUALIFICATION OF REGISTERED THERAPISTS

I. OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

A majority of the registered occupational therapists qualified in Singapore. Other major countries where our registered occupational therapists qualified in include Australia, India and Philippines.

Table 5a. Country/Area of Basic Qualification for Registered Occupational Therapists (Years 2014 to 2015)

Country/Area of Basic Qualification	Number of OT in 2014	Number of OT in 2015
Singapore	499	541
Australia	101	109
India	76	82
Philippines	72	70
United Kingdom	43	52
Ireland	29	31
Taiwan	23	21
Malaysia	23	23
Hong Kong	12	11
Others	27	27
Total	905	967

II. PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

Most of our registered physiotherapists qualified in Singapore. Other major countries where our registered physiotherapists were qualified in include Australia, India and the United Kingdom.

Table 5b. Country/Area of Basic Qualification for Registered Physiotherapists (Years 2014 to 2015)

Country/Area of Basic Qualification	Number of PT in 2014	Number of PT in 2015
Singapore	605	703
Australia	190	221
India	158	156
United Kingdom	129	135
Malaysia	71	84
Ireland	55	62
Myanmar	46	47
Taiwan	38	41
Philippines	36	37
New Zealand	21	23
United States of America	15	12
Hong Kong	10	10
Others	20	19
Total	1,394	1,550

III. SPEECH LANGUAGE THERAPISTS

Our speech-language therapists predominantly qualified in Australia, followed by Singapore and India.

Table 5c. Country/Area of Basic Qualification for Registered Speech-Language Therapists (Years 2014 to 2015)

Country/Area of Basic Qualification	Number of SLT in 2014	Number of SLT in 2015
Singapore ¹	58	80
Australia	170	209
India	44	52
United Kingdom	40	38
Ireland	29	31
United States of America	16	18
Malaysia	15	15
Philippines	12	11
Others	16	20
Total	400	474

¹ The Masters in Speech and Language Pathology was established at the National University of Singapore only in 2007.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF REGISTERED THERAPISTS

The therapy professions are young and female dominated, with the majority of all registered therapists within the age group of 20-29, followed by those in the 30-39 age group. Singapore citizens and PRs make up 76% of the pool across the three professional groups. **Table 6** shows the demographic profile of registered therapists by gender, age, and nationality.

Table 6. General Profile of Registered Therapists as at 31 December 2015

Demographic Profile	Number for Each Profession		
	OT	PT	SLT
Gender			
Male	183 (18.9%)	427 (27.5%)	36 (7.6%)
Female	784 (81.1%)	1,123 (72.5%)	438 (92.4%)
Age			
20-29	448 (46.3%)	688 (44.4%)	215 (45.4%)
30-39	383 (39.6%)	582 (37.5%)	179 (37.8%)
40-49	110 (11.4%)	215 (13.9%)	64 (13.5%)
50-59	19 (2.0%)	43 (2.8%)	12 (2.5%)
60 and above	7 (0.7%)	22 (1.4%)	4 (0.8%)
Nationality			
Singapore Citizen & PR	749 (77.5%)	1,186 (76.5%)	350 (73.8%)
Non-Citizen	218 (22.5%)	364 (23.5%)	124 (26.2%)
Total Number	967	1,550	474

Charts 3a to 3c provide a breakdown of the information detailed in **Table 6**.

Chart 3a. Total number of registered therapists by gender as at 31 December 2015

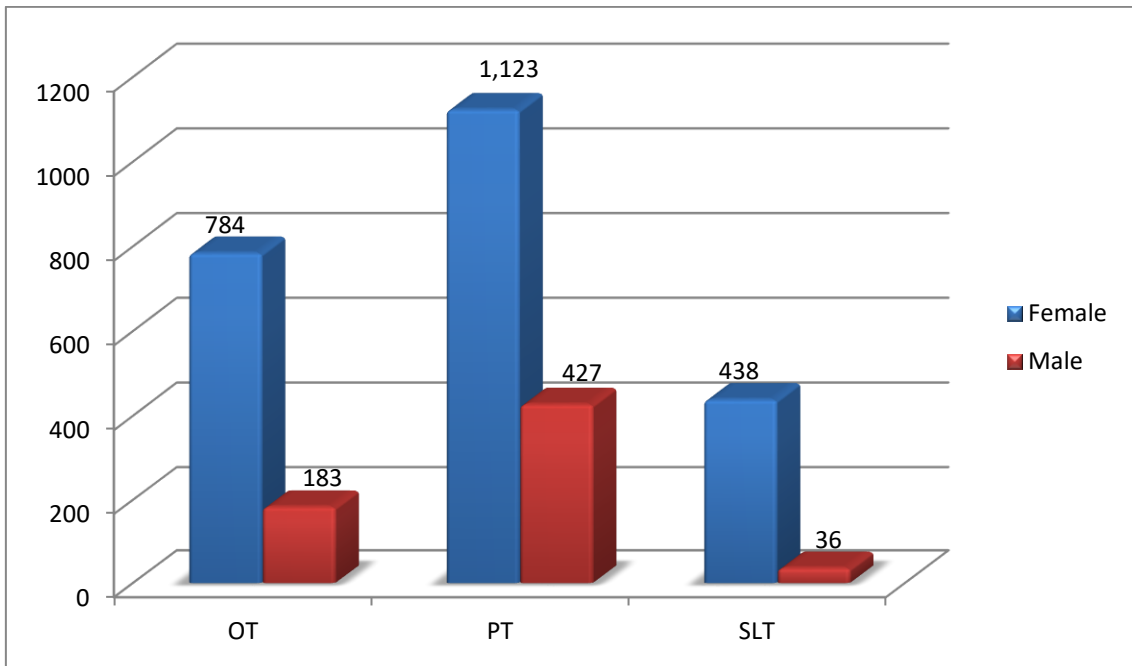


Chart 3b. Registered therapists by age group as at 31 December 2015

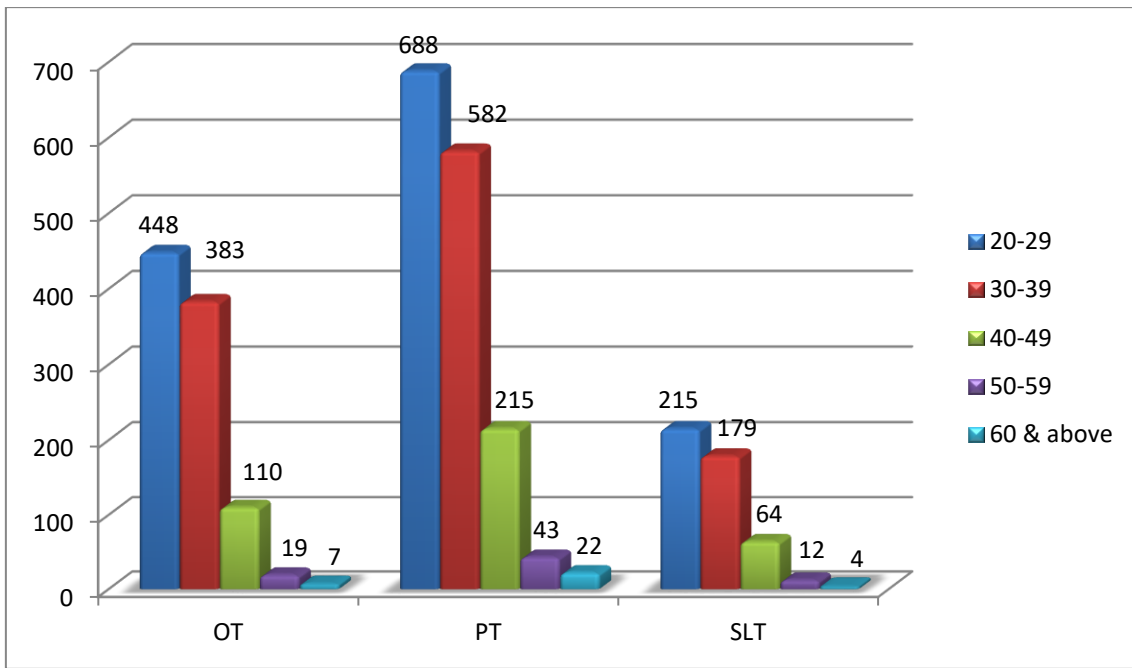
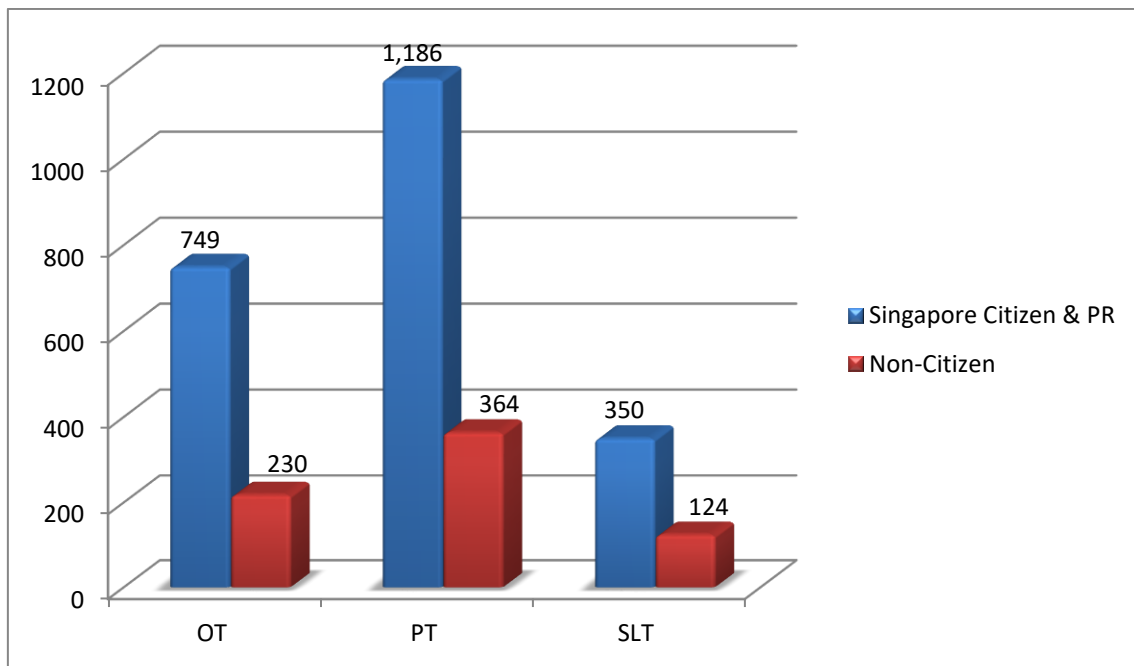


Chart 3c. Registered therapists by nationality as at 31 December 2015



MASS PRACTISING CERTIFICATE RENEWAL EXERCISE 2015

A total of 2,010 registered allied health professionals under full or restricted registration whose practising certificates lapsed on 31 December 2015 were required to renew their practising certificates. Across all three professions, approximately 92% of registered allied health professionals submitted their applications to renew their practising certificates before the end of 2015. The majority of registrants who did not submit a renewal application had either left the country or were pursuing further studies.

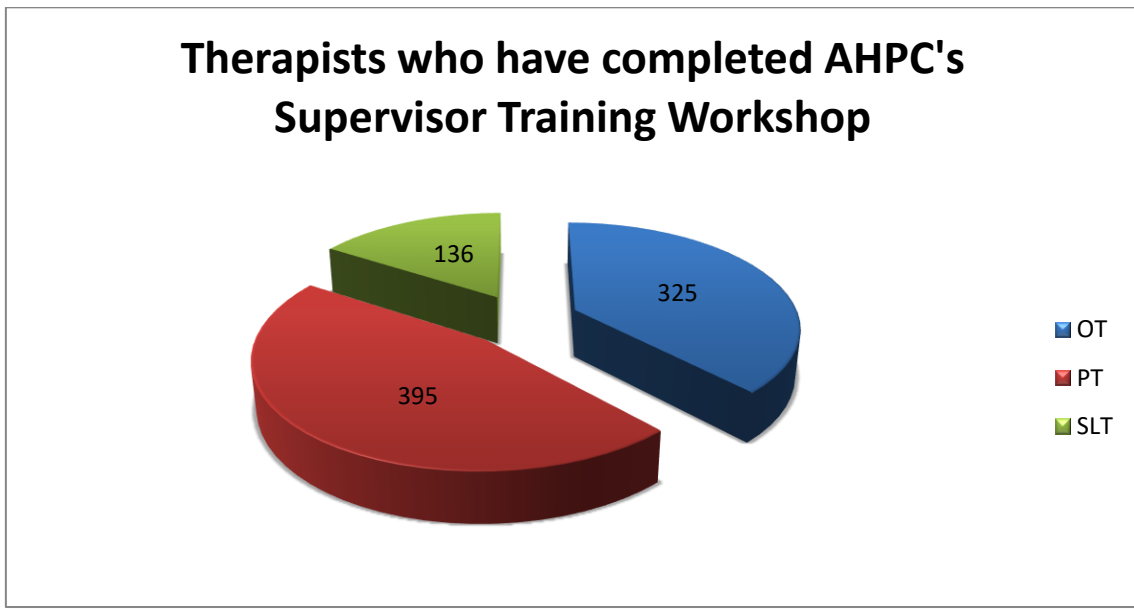
Table 7. Breakdown of Applications for Renewal of Practising Certificate received during the 2015 Mass Registration Exercise

	Number for Each Profession		
	OT	PT	SLT
No. of applications processed	626 (90.3%)	967 (94.2%)	262 (90%)
No. of AHPs who did not renew their PCs by 31 Dec 2015	67 (9.7%)	59 (5.8%)	29 (10%)
Total no. of AHPs who were required to renew their PCs by 31 Dec 2015	693	1,026	291

AHPC'S SUPERVISOR TRAINING WORKSHOPS

A total of 856 therapists have attended AHPC's Supervisor Training Workshops since the commencement of registration. 202 of these therapists attended the training in 2015. The workshops provide these supervisors with the necessary skills and knowledge to supervise conditionally registered therapists.

Chart 4. Therapists who have completed AHPC's Supervisor Training Workshop by Profession as at 31 December 2015



COMPLAINTS

The Council received a total of four complaints since its inception. One of the complaints was dismissed while two of the therapists were issued letters of advice. The remaining case was under investigation as at 31 Dec 2015.

COMPLAINTS OF THE CONDUCT OF A REGISTERED ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

I. ANONYMOUS COMPLAINT AGAINST OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

In July 2013, an anonymous complaint was received against an occupational therapist for unprofessional conduct. Upon review by the complaints committee, the complaint was dismissed as no evidence had been provided and it was not supported by a statutory declaration. In addition, as it was submitted anonymously, there was no viable method to verify its allegations.

II. COMPLAINT AGAINST PHYSIOTHERAPIST FOR TAMPERING WITH MEDICAL CERTIFICATES

The Council had referred a conditionally registered physiotherapist to the Complaints Panel in July 2014 as her conduct was unacceptable of a registered allied health professional. A review of her supervisory assessment reports revealed that the physiotherapist had been dismissed by her employing organisation after she tampered with her medical certificates. Upon further investigation and assessment, the physiotherapist was issued a letter of advice cautioning her to improve her professional integrity and work ethic.

COMPLAINTS THAT THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY A REGISTERED ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL IS NOT OF A REASONABLE QUALITY

III. COMPLAINT AGAINST OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST FOR NOT PROVIDING AN ASSESSMENT REPORT

In October 2014, the AHPC received a complaint from a member of public who did not receive a formal assessment report from her occupational therapist after multiple therapy sessions, thus delaying her children's treatment. Upon careful review of the facts, the complaints committee was of the view that the complaint was likely brought about by a breakdown in communication and issued a letter of advice to the occupational therapist to improve her communications with clients.



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