

Massage Profession in Indonesia

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Abstract

Massage is the most common occupation for the blind in Indonesia. Massage as a profession was introduced to Indonesia by a German Ernst Tils in 1957. In the rehabilitation centre of Solo, Central Java, He was teaching sport massage to blind trainees based on a book written by Prof. Thomson.

Shiatshu was introduced in 1993 by a Japanese Tetsuo Uno who was teaching in the rehabilitation centre for the blind in Bandung.

Currently the sport massage is taught in rehabilitation centres for the blind all over Indonesia. There are about 100 such centres. Shiatshu is only taught in some of the centres. The training period varies from six months to two years. The curriculum includes anatomy, physiology and pathology in addition to the massage techniques. Input to the training course must have at least primary education certificate to take sport massage, and secondary education certificate to take shiatshu.

Currently there are about 10,000 blind massage practitioners all over Indonesia, and the majority of them are practicing sport massage. Generally they open their own clinic or are employed in such clinics. Their income varies greatly depending upon the area where the clinics are, their "flight hours", and their business management.

The Indonesian society seems to identify massage with blindness. That is, they seem to think that massage profession belongs exclusively to blind people. In a way this is positive, but since blindness is regarded as unrespectable, massage is also generally not regarded as a professional occupation. Blindness organizations are campaigning to promote the status of this profession in the Indonesian society.