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## **Standards of practice for dry needling**

Ensuring patient safety is paramount for physicians. To that end, delegates adopted new policy that recognizes the procedure of dry needling as invasive.

Physical therapists are increasingly incorporating dry needling into their practice. Dry needling is indistinguishable from acupuncture, yet physical therapists are using this invasive procedure with as little as 12 hours of training, while the industry standard minimum for physicians to practice acupuncture is 300 hours of training.

Delegates agreed that the practice of dry needling by physical therapists and other non-physician groups should include—at a minimum—the benchmarking of training and standards to already existing standards of training, certification and continuing education that exist for the practice of acupuncture.

The policy also maintains that dry needling as an invasive procedure should only be performed by practitioners with standard training and familiarity with routine use of needles in their practice, such as licensed medical physicians and licensed acupuncturists.

“Lax regulation and nonexistent standards surround this invasive practice,” AMA Board Member Russel W.H. Kridel said in a news release. “For patients’ safety, practitioners should meet standards required for acupuncturists and physicians.”