

AWARENESS, BELIEF, ATTITUDE AND UTILIZATION OF PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES AMONG GENERAL POPULATION OF PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Physiotherapy is a type of healing science which helps to make a difference in an individual's capacity to survive a dynamic and healthy way of life. Any profession that has a vast role to play in the world must have an understandable identity with the community.

Objective: This study was designed to assess the level of awareness, belief, attitude and utilization of physiotherapy services among general population of Punjab.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted in different areas of Punjab to determine the awareness, belief, attitude and utilization of physiotherapy services by using convenient sampling technique. Participants were 610, major inclusion criteria of age 15-16 years, having ability to read, respond and understand the questionnaire. Unwilling subjects were excluded. All measures were collected during a single session by spreading self-administered questionnaire to the subjects.

Results: 61.6% of the participants were having knowledge about physiotherapy. Out of these majority of the participants 26.3% got their information about physiotherapy through hospitals. Many of the respondents 88.1% believed that they have needed to know more about physiotherapy. Almost all the participants 95.5% thought that physiotherapy should be in all hospitals. 42.6% were having self-experienced of physiotherapy treatment; out of these 44.7% with fully resolved problems and 78.7% will recommend physiotherapy to other needy patients.

Conclusion: Participants in this study demonstrated a moderate level of awareness, positive beliefs and attitude towards the physiotherapy and also have a moderate level of utilization of physiotherapy services. However, there is still the need to raise the knowledge about physiotherapy among general public of Punjab.

Indexed Terms_ Awareness, Belief, Respondents, Physiotherapy, Services

I. INTRODUCTION:

Physiotherapy being an important mean of therapy for human deformities is globally recognized degree based health-care profession that was developed during World War I.(1) It promotes and maintains the health, physical comfort of individuals of all age groups and also prevents functional limitations, impairments, deformities, and disability due to various health or medical base factors, socio-economic stressors and lifestyle-based causes.(2) A survey study conducted in Pakistan showed that only 64.7% gynecologists were aware of prenatal physical therapy and 68% were aware of post-natal physical therapy that is quiet sufficient.(3) General practitioners (GPs) are usually the first point of contact for patients.(4) Even so, the role of physical therapists has gone largely unrecognized because of their training and experience.(5) Physiotherapy have a crucial role in health department and very dynamic in nature. It can be a management technique as an allied way of treatment or a main cure technique in its own sense. A competent physiotherapist must have absolute awareness regarding factors that can affect the patient, like social, psychological and cultural factors. This begins with the evaluation of the patient's illness state or stage through checkup and physical assessment.(6) Self-managed, home-based physical therapy (HBPT) is an increasingly common element of physical therapy rehabilitation programmes.(7) Physiotherapy management techniques can be used in all specialties include: Orthopedics, Neurology, Cardio-Respiratory, Obstetrics and Gynecology to treat and improve the quality of life. Physiotherapy provides services either in public hospitals or private clinics, or in rehabilitation centers and residential homes.(8) Direct access to Physiotherapy based treatment, is a normal practice in new world and other developed zones at the surface of globe.(9) in health care system of developing countries like Pakistan, Physiotherapy profession is still in the up-and-coming phase but disregarded compared to other health care streams because of very less awareness regarding physical

therapy among the general population of the society, so far, independent practice of a physiotherapist is not industrial like any other medical profession. However, physiotherapists are competent of scheduling a treatment program for their patients. They are also skillful to advise laboratory test, electro diagnostic and imaging study and analyze the reports.(10) Potential is apparent for intelligent machines to enhance various areas of physiotherapy practice through atomization of tasks.(11) Rehabilitation services included in this review were: audiology, speech-language pathology, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy.(12) Enhancing and facilitating change or optimization of body awareness and movement behaviors have been sustained throughout history as central objectives in physiotherapy.(13) Though physiotherapy is an emerging medical profession in Pakistan and professional physiotherapist has also been made available Pakistan but there still exists unsatisfactory level of access towards a physiotherapist only because of lack of awareness in the society. The lack of awareness about the physical therapy among other health care professionals as well as in general population is one of the crucial issues in modern medic now a days, thus it is badly needed to increase the awareness about such an important way of healing, so that our nation can stand with well-appeared nations of the world in all modern horizons of life. The study is unique in the sense that it is improving the level of awareness and knowledge of physiotherapy services among general population of Punjab. This study will help to find knowledge and awareness about physiotherapy in general population. This knowledge will help them to use physiotherapy in future. More physiotherapy services will be utilized by general population if they are well aware of it. It explores the value of physiotherapy, and establishes the expectations of public about physiotherapy services.

II. METHODOLOGY:

A Descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out on general population from different rural and urban areas of Punjab was considered. Sample size was 334 & calculated by open-epi. Convenient sampling was used. During the whole period of study, the ethics was kept in consideration. Written informed consent was taken from all the study subjects. Male and female both participants of age 15-60 were included. Major inclusion criterions were ability to read, respond and understand the contents of questionnaire. Unwilling subjects were excluded. A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted in different rural and urban areas of Punjab to determine the awareness, belief, attitude and utilization of physiotherapy services by using convenient sampling

technique. The duration of whole study process was about 6 months after the proposal have been approved. The subjects under study consideration belonged to two genders, male and female participants of age 15-60 were included and unwilling subjects were excluded. All measures were collected during a single session. After taking informed consent a self-administered questionnaire was given to the subjects via a face to face and self-informed to avoid any misreading, misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and misconception. Also, the questions were close ended to prevent any statistical errors. All collected data were entered in computer program SPSS version 20 and analyzed through this software.

III. RESULTS:

Mean and standard deviation for quantitative variables, frequencies and percentages for qualitative variables, were displayed in tables. 55.7% were males and 44.3% were females and mean age of sample size which is 28.98 years with SD 11.805. Majority of the participants were from Rahimyar khan, Muzaffargarh and Narowal, Faisalabad, Lahore, Dera Ghazi Khan and Sahiwal. Around half of the sample size was graduated (46.4%), majority were unemployed (45.1%).

Table-1: Frequency distribution for Awareness of participants regarding physical therapy

		Frequency (Percentage)
Do you about physical know t al therapy? (n=610)	Yes	376 (61.6%)
	No	234 (38.4%)
If yes:		
How did kno about your w physiotherap y? (n=376)	During graduatio n	82 (21.8%)
	Through hospital	99 (26.3%)
	Mass media	72 (19.1%)
	Colleagues	56 (14.9%)
	Others	67 (17.8%)

Table-2: Frequency distribution of awareness regarding utilization of physical therapy interventions

		Frequency (Percentage) N=610
Exercises	Yes	356 (94.7%)
	No	9 (2.4%)
	Don't Know	11 (2.9%)
Mobilization	Yes	147 (39.1%)
	No	72 (19.5%)
	Don't Know	157 (41.8%)
Drugs	Yes	229 (60.9%)
	No	76 (20.2%)
	Don't Know	71 (18.9%)
Electrical Modalities	Yes	252 (67.0%)
	No	29 (7.7%)
	Don't Know	95 (25.3%)

61.6% of the participants were having knowledge about physiotherapy. Out of these majority of the participants 26.3% got their information about physiotherapy through hospitals. Many of the respondents 88.1% believed that they have needed to know more about physiotherapy. Neuro-rehabilitation physiotherapist were known by 65.3%, ICU therapist were known by 25.2%, role of therapist in burn patients by 36.9%, ortho-rehabilitation role by 72.1%, in pressure ulcers and bed ridden by 39.5%, women health by 57.8%, role of therapist in sports by 71.4%, in integumentary conditions by 20.4% and musculoskeletal disorders by 76.4%. Almost all the participants 95.5% thought that physiotherapy should be in all hospitals. 42.6% were having self-experienced of physiotherapy treatment; out of these 44.7% with fully resolved problems and 78.7% will recommend physiotherapy to other needy patients.

Table-3: Satisfaction of the participants by physiotherapy treatment

		Frequency (percentage) n=610
What do you think physiotherapy treatment Improved your problem?	Fully resolved	168 (44.7%)
	slightly improve	74 (19.7%)
	not improved	1 (.3%)
	don't know	133 (35.4%)

Table-4: Attitude of the participants towards physiotherapy

		Frequency (percentage) n=610
Do you think that physiotherapy is necessary?	Yes	294 (78.4%)
	No	81 (21.6)
Would you encourage your family members/friends to become a physiotherapist?	Yes	260 (69.1%)
	No	116 (30.9%)

IV. DISCUSSION:

Physiotherapy, one of important healing therapies needs to be promoted as a cure method. The main purpose of this study was to explore the awareness, belief, attitude, and utilization of physiotherapy among the public of Punjab province, Pakistan. A moderately large number of people, as results showed, 61.6% of the total sample size in this study were well-known with physiotherapy. A parallel study by **Sheppard** though found that a larger percentage of the community in Australia reported very high knowledge with (85%) and awareness of (96%) physiotherapy. This is why the continuation of physiotherapy services may overshadow and hence limit its stage of awareness among public of Pakistan.(14) This study showed that participants having knowledge about the interventions used by physiotherapist, pressure points (36.4%), massage (60.9%), drugs (60.9%) cold (27.1%), heat (69.7%), electrical modalities (67.0%) and mobilization (39.1) This suggests that Pakistani physiotherapists may have need to provided awareness about the interventions that they are used through free medical camps in different area of the Punjab and all over in Pakistan. However most of the participants (94.7%) knew about exercises but it was not unexpectedly because another study done by **Sneha Battin** in 2017 it was reported that all subjects (100%) agreed that physiotherapist use exercises to care for patients.(15) Although another study was done by **Box et.al** (16) which shows the benefits of post-operative physiotherapy, a therapist's role in the preoperative phase cannot be ignored as studied by **Sherin**.(17) To the description by **Threlkeld**, that the national association is important to helping the public recognize the role of physiotherapist in the health care deliverance system and the exceptional and

multifaceted services that physiotherapists provide.(18) In this study, 62.6% respondents know that physiotherapist can prescribe X-ray, CT scan, and MRI and Lab test. 69.8% knows that physiotherapist can prescribe fitness plan and weight reduction plans. In Europe according to the **Edwards** greater part of the community were aware of physiotherapy services and have awareness on what the job entails, such that there is high demand for the services of physiotherapy among the public.(19) In **Australia** Physiotherapists enjoy professional independence and the level of understanding is high while in Pakistan physiotherapy services giving to the patients through doctor's referral. This suggests that mutual understandings are established between the general practitioners and physiotherapists.(20) A large number of the respondents 78.4% feel that physiotherapy is necessary in health care establishment; almost all of the participants 95.5% feel that there should be physiotherapy centers in all hospitals. Similar findings in another study done by **Sneha Battin in 2017**, majority of the respondents 92% think about physiotherapy centers should be in all hospitals.(15)

V. Conclusion:

Participants in this study demonstrated a moderate level of awareness, positive beliefs and attitude towards Physiotherapy and also have a moderate level of utilization of physiotherapy services. But these results are not so satisfactory and needs a positive spread of knowledge of Physiotherapy as a proper medical treatment. It is concluded that Hospitals, Mass media and schools has been identified as major source of information about Physiotherapy among general public of subjected areas.

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