

Awareness of Physiotherapy among Higher Secondary Students of Ahmedabad City - A Cross Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: In the healthcare sector, professions like those of Doctors and Nurses are well known than the other paramedical professions like Physiotherapy. However, the physiotherapist plays a major role in providing health care and it is a highly recognized profession worldwide. Physiotherapists work in a wide-ranging of health settings including Cardio-Pulmonary, Neurological and Orthopedic Conditions, occupational health and Ergonomic factors, sports Injuries and care of the elderly. The aim of this study was to assess the level of awareness about physiotherapy among high school students and to assess the sources from which they could obtain information regarding physiotherapy.

Need Of The Study: When planning one's future career, it is important to have information about various occupations and professions that are related to his/her field of study. Even though a few people have an idea about their future career pathways in advance, majority of them are uncertain about it. For most people, these plans are usually made during their early and late adolescence. A majority of school children are also unaware about career opportunities open to them and most of them analyse their career prospects by looking at the social status of the occupation of their choice and the opportunities for career development. Students choose physiotherapy as a Optional that after they get don't enough score to get MBBS and other known field, here need arise to know about the Physiotherapy profession as a Mandatory for every aspects of life process.

Methodology: A survey was implemented in this study. The study was undertaken with the help of a Questionnaire which was distributed to 131 higher secondary students with biology as elective subject.

Result: The overall awareness about physiotherapy was approximately 53.38%. The true answer rates for these questions were 25% and 45.9% respectively. 9.16% of the study population was not aware of treatment methods used in physiotherapy, and 36% did not know when to meet a physiotherapist. 21.37% of students were unaware about the uses of physiotherapy in other disease conditions than sports injuries, mainly in chest conditions like bronchitis (37%).

Conclusion: The students have a moderate awareness about Physiotherapy; the awareness about the role of Physiotherapy in specialties other than orthopaedics is less satisfactory.

Keywords: Awareness, High school students, Physiotherapy

INTRODUCTION

In the healthcare sector, professions like those of Doctors and Nurses are well known than the other paramedical professions like Physiotherapy.⁽¹⁾ Physical therapists are

movement experts who improve quality of life through prescribed exercise, hands-on care, and patient education Physiotherapists assess each patient and develop a personalised plan, using different treatment

techniques so as to treat the underlying condition. Physiotherapists help in reducing pain, regaining range of motion, regaining strength after injuries and promoting health and ergonomics.⁽²⁾ Physiotherapy management techniques can be used in all specialties such as orthopaedics, Neurology, Cardio-respiratory, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Sports Injuries and can be used to treat various conditions from paediatric age group to geriatric age group⁽³⁾ In Indian education system generally, students pursue the Physiotherapy course after their Higher secondary course. The higher secondary course has various branches of studies. The Students from science background are eligible to pursue health courses such as Medicine, Physiotherapy & Nursing. It is necessary for the higher secondary students to have appropriate knowledge about the above courses in order to select those courses as their career. It is important for them to have appropriate awareness and a positive attitude about the profession⁽⁴⁾

When planning one's future career, it is important to have information about various occupations and professions that are related to his/her field of study. Even though a few people have an idea about their future career pathways in advance, majority of them are uncertain about it. For most people, these plans are usually made during their early and late adolescence. A majority of school children are also unaware about career opportunities open to them and most of them analyse their career prospects by looking at the social status of the occupation of their choice and the opportunities for career development.

So, here the need of arises to evaluate awareness of physiotherapy among higher secondary students.

MATERIALS & METHODS

Study Design: A Cross-sectional study

Sample size: 131

Study population: Higher secondary students

Sampling technique: A Survey

Inclusion Criteria:

- Higher secondary students
- Science group students (Students who opted to study Physics, chemistry and Biology in higher secondary was selected)

Exclusion Criteria:

- Students who were unwilling to participate in the research
- Non-science students
- Science students with maths as their subject
- Absent on the day of data collection

RESULT

- **Subjective data:** 131 students were filled the questionnaire.

- **Awareness in physiotherapy:** In general, the awareness about physiotherapy and structure of a physiotherapy unit was unsatisfactory (Questions 1 and 3). The true answer rates for these questions were 25% and 45.9% respectively (Table 1). 9.16% of the study population was not aware of treatment methods used in physiotherapy (Question 5), and 36% did not know when to meet a physiotherapist (Question 6). 21.37% of student were unaware about the uses of physiotherapy in other disease conditions than sports injuries (Question 7), mainly in chest conditions like bronchitis (37%). The overall awareness about physiotherapy (as indicated by true answers to the questions - Table 1) was approximately 53.38%.

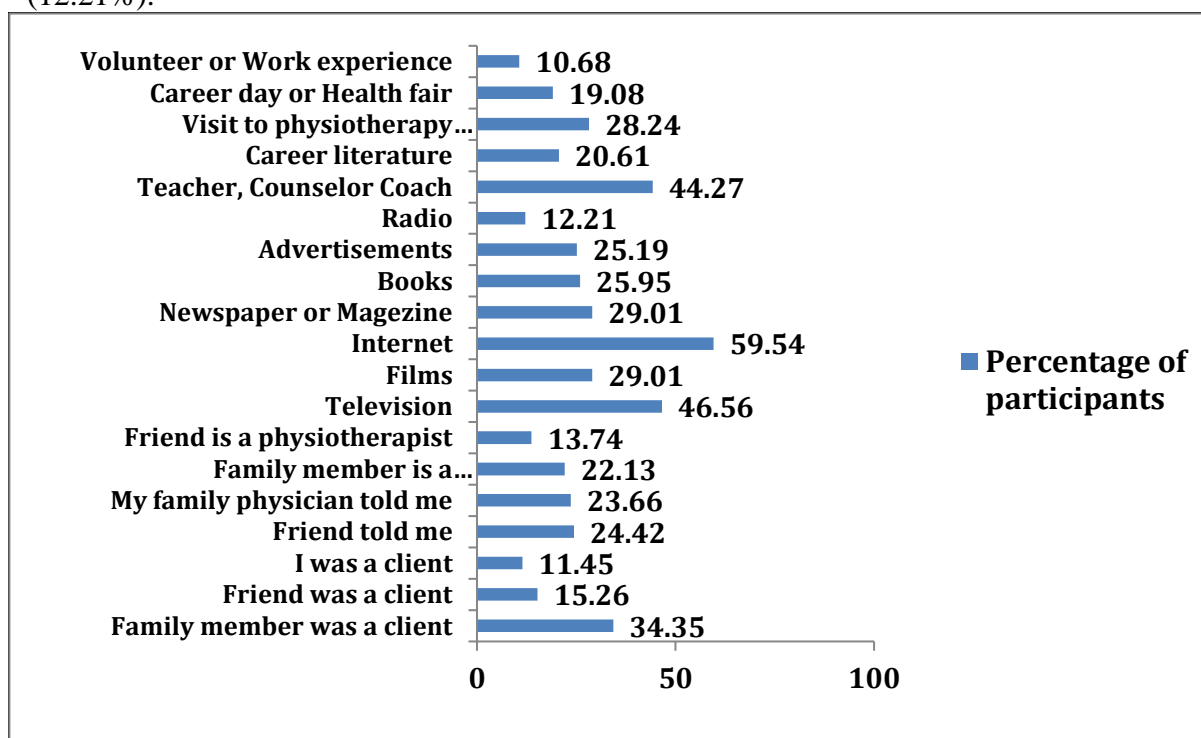
Table 1: AWARENESS OF PHYSIOTHERAPY

Topic Question	Sub Questions	Right answer %	Wrong answer %	Don't know %
1. Physiotherapy is,	a. Practiced by the doctors	12.21	81.67	6.11
	b. Acupuncture is a branch of physiotherapy	19.08	54.19	26.72
	c. Masseurs are physiotherapist	13.74	58.77	27.48
	d. An indigenous treatment method	54.96	9.92	35.11

Table no 1 continued....

2. Physiotherapy,	a. Involved in rehabilitation of injuries	59.54	29.01	11.45
	b. Helps in improving quality of life of injured person	76.34	14.5	9.16
	c. Helps in improving fitness level of sportsmen	73.28	11.45	15.27
	d. Helps in regaining activities of daily living	57.25	17.56	25.19
3. A Physiotherapy unit includes	a. A gymnasium with exercising machines, gym balls and other equipment	59.54	20.61	19.85
	b. Electrical modalities	51.15	15.27	33.59
	c. a section for manual treatments using bandages, tapes and splints	49.62	32.82	17.56
	d. A therapeutic pool	23.66	25.19	51.15
4. Places to get physiotherapy services	a. Private clinics	81.68	12.21	6.11
	b. Government hospitals	69.47	12.98	17.56
	c. Private hospitals	80.92	9.16	9.92
	d. NGOs	20.61	34.35	44.04
5. Physiotherapy includes,	a. Manual therapy	72.52	6.11	21.37
	b. Ice/Heat therapy	75.57	11.45	12.98
	c. Hydrotherapy	44.27	12.98	42.75
	d. Electrotherapy and exercise therapy	80.15	6.11	13.74
6. Do you know when to meet the physiotherapist,	a. When you have an injury	36.64	50.38	12.98
	b. When there is pain arising in any part with or without a known cause	13.74	74.81	11.45
	c. When you feel pain or discomfort in any of the sporting technique	77.09	10.67	12.21
	d. When you have fever or flu	77.86	6.87	15.27
7. Uses of physiotherapy in any other conditions than in sport injuries	a. Neurological conditions (stroke, Parkinson)	61.83	16.79	21.37
	b. Musculoskeletal conditions (Osteoarthritis)	77.09	9.16	13.73
	c. Paediatric conditions(Cerebral palsy)	48.85	22.90	28.24
	d. Chest conditions (Bronchitis)	25.95	36.64	37.40

- **Source of information about physiotherapy:** The commonest source to obtain information regarding physiotherapy was Internet (59.54%), followed by the television and Teacher, Counselor Coach (46.56% and 44.27% respectively). Sources mentioned less often were family member was a client (34.35%), newspaper or magazine (29.01%) and films (29.01%). Those cited least often were volunteer or work experience (10.68%) and radio (12.21%).



Graph 1: SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT PHYSIOTHERAPY

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to evaluate the level of awareness and attitude towards physiotherapy among higher secondary students. The selected population is higher secondary science background students because they are the potential candidates to pursue bachelor of Physiotherapy course in India. The basic awareness about Physiotherapy among higher secondary students is not satisfactory.⁽⁴⁾ The survey helped to understand the existing level of awareness about physiotherapy and its scope/areas of intervention among higher secondary students.⁽⁵⁾ In general, half (53.38%) of high school students were unaware of physiotherapy profession and its applications in patient management. This finding suggests that the high school students of Ahmedabad are less informed about physiotherapy.⁽¹⁾

Many high school students thought that physiotherapy is practiced by either doctors (81.67%) or masseurs (58.77%).⁽¹⁾ This is an interesting finding that majority of the sample aware of the role of physiotherapy in rehabilitation of injuries, improving quality of life of injured person, regaining activities of daily living and improving fitness level of sportsmen.⁽⁴⁾ Many students aware about electro therapy and exercise therapy (80.15%) followed by ice/heat therapy (75.57%) and manual therapy (72.52%) as a mode of Physiotherapy treatment. The awareness about hydrotherapy is not satisfactory (44.27%).⁽⁴⁾

In India the students will be in higher secondary level at the age of 16-18 and that is the period to select their future career. Hence we have to provide adequate information about the profession so that the student may take Physiotherapy as a choice of career.⁽⁴⁾ More the students will get aware more they will take admissions. A measure has to be taken to increase the awareness. A brief introductory session can be conducted to higher secondary students to develop better awareness about the profession which would be helpful in considering the physiotherapy as a field of study.

Similarly a study done by Dissanayaka TD, Banneheka S. more than half (63%) of high school students were unaware of physiotherapy profession⁽¹⁾.

According to a study conducted by Lorimer Moseley⁽⁶⁾, combined physiotherapy treatment and patient education produced symptomatic and functional change in moderately disabled chronic low back pain patients.

It is evident from the study most of the respondents aware of Physiotherapy is useful in Musculoskeletal conditions (77.09%). The similar findings noticed in the study conducted by Riju⁽⁷⁾ among high school students in Anand district (India). Kacie⁽⁸⁾ who conducted a study among public at Kansas city, United states the highest awareness of Physiotherapy is musculoskeletal conditions (90%). This study implicates the awareness about the role of Physiotherapy in other specialty (neurology, Cardiorespiratory, Women's health, Paediatrics) condition has to improved.

The major limitation is sample size. The findings of this study cannot be generalized to higher secondary students of Ahmedabad city as all coaching classes could not be included.

This study can be conducted among the higher secondary students of Gujarat. This study can be conducted on students of standard 10th to check their awareness regarding physiotherapy as they have to select their stream.

CONCLUSION

The students have a moderate awareness about Physiotherapy; the awareness about the role of Physiotherapy in orthopaedics is highly satisfactory (77.09%) and in chest condition it is less satisfactory (25.95%). The commonest source to obtain information regarding physiotherapy was Internet (59.54%).

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