

# Knowledge of Mental Health Among Physiotherapy Students

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Mental health literacy can be defined as knowledge and beliefs about mental disorder which did their recognition, management, or prevention. Many of physical comorbidities fall under scope of musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory & neurological conditions for which physiotherapy is essential component of management. Thus, knowledge of mental health among physiotherapy students is essential to give treatment to people with any dis-abilities. There is lack of studies which show awareness of mental health literacy among physiotherapy students. Thus, purpose of the present study is to assess the knowledge of mental health among physiotherapy students in Ahmedabad, India.

**Methodology:** A questionnaire of Mental Health Literacy scale (MHLs) was made through google form and circulated on online platform from which responses were received through the same. Based on inclusion and exclusion criteria 203 subjects were selected and statistical analysis of the obtained data was done.

**Result:** In this study, result showed that combined mean score on the Mental health literacy scale (MHLs) was 110.40 out of 160(SD= 10.93) which is 68.99%.

**Conclusion:** This study concludes that physiotherapy students have above average level of knowledge in various aspects of mental health.

**Keywords:** [Knowledge, Mental health, Physiotherapy student]

## INTRODUCTION

Mental health is an important aspect of overall well-being. "Health is a condition of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not just the absence of sickness or disability," according to the WHO constitution. This concept implies that mental health encompasses more than the absence of mental illnesses or impairments.<sup>[1]</sup> Mental health is a condition of well-being in which a person recognizes his or her own strengths, and is able to cope with everyday pressures, works effectively, and contributes to his or her community. The capacity to get access to, comprehend, and apply information in ways that promote and sustain good health has been characterized as health literacy (HL). In 1954, Dr. Brock

Chisholm, the first Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), predicted that "there can be no real physical health without mental health."<sup>[1]</sup>

The WHO extended the definition of HL in 1998 to include "the cognitive and social abilities that define an individual's motivation and ability to get, comprehend, and utilize information in ways that promote and sustain good health." The mental health care delivery system has a difficulty due to a lack of understanding regarding mental illnesses. HL and awareness are two sides of the same coin. Ignorance and misinformation have negative repercussions such as stigma and discrimination.<sup>[1]</sup>

Mental health literacy can be defined as knowledge and beliefs about mental disorder

which did their recognition, management, or prevention.<sup>[3]</sup> Failure to recognize the symptoms of mental illness and a lack of knowledge of the appropriate actions to take if presented with these symptoms are considered sign of poor mental health literacy<sup>[3]</sup>.

The concept of mental health literacy implies that it is crucial to increase the knowledge of people about mental health aspects and mental disorders since it is a prerequisite for early recognition and seeking treatment. In spite of significant developments in India's healthcare systems, studies have rarely focused on literacy about mental illness.<sup>[4]</sup>

Awareness of existing mental health literacy levels in physiotherapy students is crucial for evaluation of targeted educational interventions and for further development and implementation of these intervention in the future<sup>[6]</sup>.

Physiotherapists have a key role in the treatment of patients with mental health disorders and their interventions may have a broad spectrum of benefits for patients. Many of physical comorbidities fall under scope of musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory & neurological conditions for which physiotherapy is essential component of management.

There is lack of studies which show knowledge of mental health among physiotherapy students. So, here arises the need of this study is to assess the knowledge of mental health among physiotherapy students in Ahmedabad, India. The aim of the

study is to evaluate the knowledge of mental health among physiotherapy students.

## MATERIALS & METHODS

The present study was an observational study carried out among undergraduate and postgraduate physiotherapy students of Ahmedabad Institute of Medical Sciences, Ahmedabad, Gujrat. A questionnaire of Mental Health Literacy scale (MHLs; O'Connor & Casey, 2015)<sup>[2]</sup> ( $\alpha = 0.873$ ) was circulated on online platform which was filled by 203 participants.

### Inclusion criteria:

1. Age- above 18
2. Undergraduate and postgraduate physiotherapy students
3. Both male and female

### Exclusion criteria:

1. 1st year BPT student
2. Clinical staff, academicians
3. PhD students

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical analysis of the obtained data was done through SPSS version 2020]

## RESULT

In this study, 203 physiotherapy students were included. It consists of 171(84%) females and 72(16%) males with a mean age of 20.48years (SD= 1.276). The result showed that mean score on the mental health literacy scale was 110.40 out of 160 (SD=10.93) which is 68.99% (SD=6.83).

Table 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS						
	N	RANGE	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
AGE	203	7	18	25	20.48	1.276
SCORE	203	57	82	139	110.40	10.937
PERCENTAGE	100	35.62	51.25	86.87	68.99	6.83

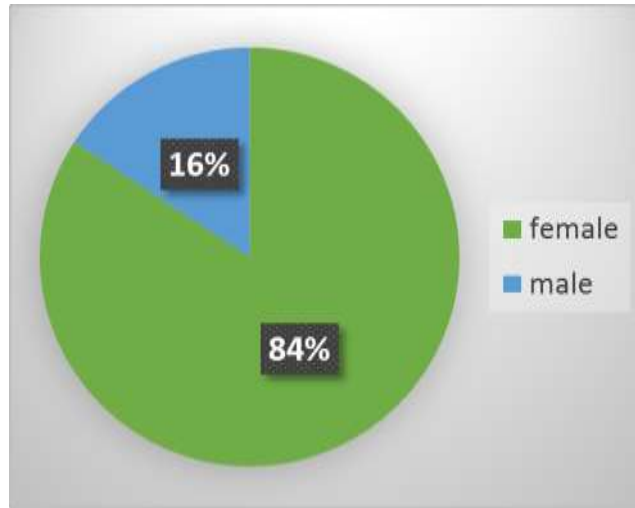


Figure 1: GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

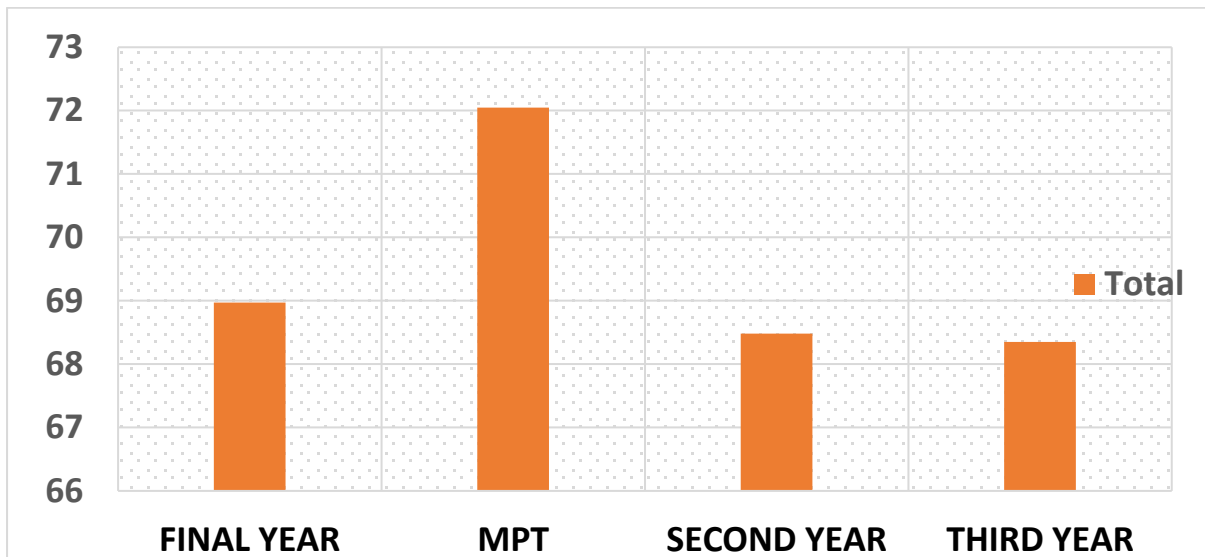


Figure 2: KNOWLEDGE OF MENTAL HEALTH (%) ACCORDING TO ACADEMIC YEAR

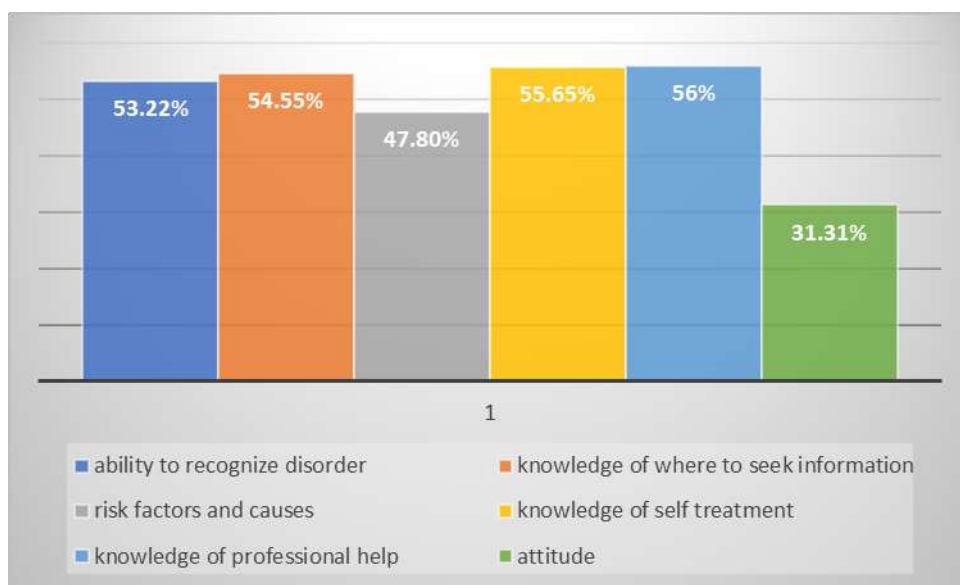


Figure 3: KNOWLEDGE OF ATTRIBUTES OF MENTAL HEALTH

## DISCUSSION

In the present study, it was found that there is above average (68.99%) level of knowledge about mental health literacy in physiotherapy students. Also, it was found that students in a higher year of study had significantly higher scores on overall attitudes towards mental health. There are six attributes of mental health literacy scale in which knowledge of professional help was found to be most (56%). The education system, the curriculum of physiotherapy students and requirement of knowledge regarding other medical fields for physiotherapy profession may be responsible for this result. Whereas, knowledge of attitude that promote recognition or appropriate help-seeking behavior was least (31.31%) in the students. This might be due to social stigmas about mental health prevailing in developing countries like India. Participants were having below average (47.80%) knowledge of risk factors and causes of mental health issues<sup>[1]</sup>.

There are some previous studies has been found which support to the present study. Altweck L et al. Stated that recognition of mental illness is further linked with the other aspects of the MHL model. Better knowledge about mental disorders in general is a good indicator of knowledge about treatment options and beliefs about causes of mental disorders<sup>[6]</sup>.

A study done by Hearn et al. (2019) titled Evaluating Mental health Literacy in Medical Students in the United Kingdom. In this study, he suggested that medical students were most competent in their abilities to recognize disorders and had attitudes that promoted recognition or appropriate help-seeking behavior.

George et al. (2022) has been done an experimental study titled Examining Mental Health Literacy Levels of Young Adults Enrolled in an Early Psychosis Intervention Program. In this study he stated that the exposure (whether personal or through others) to mental health issues will have led to an increased understanding of their symptoms, impact, and management<sup>[7]</sup>.

Thus, Mental health training and education can be given and awareness programs can be conducted to increase the level of knowledge regarding this topic. Thus, knowledge of mental health among physiotherapy students is essential to give treatment to people with any dis-abilities.

The main limitation of this study was the small sample size of the participants. A larger sample size would have allowed for results with greater statistical significance.

Future study should be done in different population who experience psychotic symptoms may examine potential long-term benefit in the areas of stigma reduction and increased help-seeking knowledge and behavior following an educational intervention through awareness program or online circulation

## CONCLUSION

From this study, it can be concluded that there is above average knowledge among physiotherapy students about mental health. In which knowledge of self-treatment and professional help is maximum and about attitude that promote recognition or appropriate help seeking behaviors is minimum. And there is increase in the rate of knowledge with increase in level of education.

**Conflict of Interest:** None

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