

Perspective of Physiotherapist in and around Pune, India with Regard to Acquiring Master's Degree - A Survey Based Study

Pinal Vilas Munot¹, Mukta Deshpande², Pournima Pawar³

¹Intern, College of Physiotherapy, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, Maharashtra, India

²Assistant Professor, College of Physiotherapy, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, Maharashtra, India

³Associate professor, College of Physiotherapy, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, Maharashtra, India

Corresponding Author: Mukta Deshpande

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijhsr.20220354>

ABSTRACT

Background: Within the physiotherapy profession, there are increasing expectations concerning specialization and life-long learning. As a result, master's degree studies are becoming more popular as a means of professional advancement. Physiotherapists from Indian background might be facing a lot of hurdles that led to descent for a Master's in Physiotherapy. Hence, there is a need to explore the career pathways of graduates and the influence of Master's education on their careers.

Objective: To study the awareness of higher education opportunities following completion of the Bachelor of Physiotherapy.

Methodology: The population of the study included all post-graduation qualified physiotherapists. For this purpose, a well-structured questionnaire was utilised.

Results: In all 60 valid responses were received. The Master's program was deemed beneficial by 95% of participants. Whereas 82% of participants found that acquiring a master's degree had influenced their career.

Conclusion: There was a positive perspective noted among physiotherapists. A greater number and diversity of physiotherapists are considering post-graduation studies as a viable career option that would help them achieve greater heights in their careers.

Keywords: Higher education, Physical Therapists, Insight, Postgraduate

INTRODUCTION

The World Confederation for Physiotherapy (WCPT) defines physiotherapy as: "Physical therapists provide services that develop, maintain and restore people's maximum movement and functional ability. Physiotherapists assist people in improving their whole quality of life, glancing at physical, psychological, emotional, and social wellbeing. Physiotherapy is an internationally recognized health profession which may be practised by qualified and, where required by state or national legislation, duly

registered or licensed physiotherapist only^[1].

In a world where information and skills are continuously evolving, physiotherapy has grown in scope and complexity, resulting in several clashes, one of which is the demand for long-term development as a professional authority. As individuals selectively chase specific learning pathways, specialization has advanced with physiotherapy. A growing range of learning opportunities, including master's level studies, have been developed to aid physiotherapists in their professional development^[2].

Clinical competency, teaching, assessment, practice, and/or service development are all important aspects of clinical specialization; earning a clinical master's degree is one way to learn the skills needed for clinical specialization. [2] Professional development obtained through master's level postgraduate study advances the profession, the demands, and the organizational structure of the workplace. [3, 4] Increased competition in clinical practice necessitates obtaining higher education in physical therapy. [4]

A Master's study is a postgraduate degree that emphasizes advanced clinical skills and evidence-based. The learning culture of master level education involves structured engagement with multiple pedagogies and contexts over a period of 2 years of full-time study. [5] Compromising classroom teaching, self-pedagogical activities and clinical postings, with self-directed evidence-based practice. During the first year of the Master's program, the theoretical basis of physiotherapy is refreshed along with research methodology, biostatistics and teaching technology. During this time, the students rotate among all areas of clinical competence, including their speciality. During the second year, the students will be posted in their area of speciality. This learning program includes seminars, journal reviews, case presentations, case discussions and classroom teaching.

The goal of postgraduate academic courses for professional physiotherapists is to improve specific areas of professional practice in terms of broadening professional knowledge, developing academic attributes such as critical judgment and analytical skills, and familiarizing students with the concept of quality care at both the institutional and community levels. [2]

Loefler in 1999 recognizes the necessity of specialization in the medical profession for clinical skill development, research, and organizing and supervising training and instruction. [6] Pratt in 1994 suggested that specialized zones of practice

are important when the intricacy of what is required beyond the realm of ordinary clinical practice, necessitates the use of speciality services. [7]

Maitland 1985 indicated a need for specialized physiotherapists to be recognized and utilized, admitting that specialists should be experts in their speciality and have a working knowledge of other treatments in related fields. [8] Master's level education facilitates information acquisition by encouraging independent learning and critical thinking, but it does not change practice on its own. [9] Clinical specialization can be used to analyze and evaluate the profession. [10]

Owen in 1998 projected that as the number of physiotherapists with advanced degrees grows, as does the number of clinicians and ESPs, there will be less desire for Master's level study as a way out of clinical practice. [11]

Phillips and Pugh in 1987 gave a diagrammatic background to the degree structure in Britain by saying that: A bachelor's degree means the beneficiary has received a general education, a master's degree is a license to practice and A Doctorate is a license to teach in universities. Master's level graduate physiotherapist would be more qualified, more pliable to any technical changes, and would be a better executive. Master-level physiotherapy educators would be on the stronger side to enlist the help of a subject specialist in an area whereas graduate physiotherapists will have a basic knowledge. Postgraduate degree level qualification would allow the budding physiotherapist to develop opportunities for personal and professional growth. In many clinical setups requirement for a job is a master's level Physiotherapist. Master-level graduates have 30 to 50% of more salary than a graduate-level physiotherapist. A postgraduate physiotherapist would be better prepared to modernize their knowledge keep an eye on changes and execute it in their practice.

The body of knowledge of physical therapy is large, and therefore physical therapy specializes in a specific clinical area. Specialities offered in the master of physiotherapy are Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy diagnoses and treating disorders and injuries of the musculoskeletal system including rehabilitation after orthopaedic surgery. Neuro Physiotherapy focuses on individuals who have neurological disease or disorders including stroke, Parkinson's, SCI, ALS, facial palsy, etc. Cardiovascular and Respiratory physiotherapy offers therapy for a wide variety of cardiopulmonary disorders or pre and post-cardiac or pulmonary surgery. Sports Physiotherapy is the one involved in the care and wellbeing of athletes including recreational, semi-professional, and professional participants. Community Physiotherapy aims to help people with disabilities.

Within the physiotherapy profession, there is increasing expectations in relation to specialization and life-long learning. This has led to the increasing prominence of master level study as the route for professional development. [12] A Physiotherapist from Indian background might be facing a lot of hurdles that leads to descent for Masters in Physiotherapy. Along with this, there is a dearth of informative platforms for Higher Education Avenue after completing Masters in India. Despite this, little is known regarding the thought process of physiotherapists in relation to the post-qualification studies. [12] Hence, there is a need to explore the career pathways of graduates and the influence of Master's education on their careers. This study set out to establish influence and awareness related to Master's education. This will also help provide future prospects after BPT to help the huge field of Physiotherapy.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

It is an Observational study, obtained through a convenient sampling method with 60 participants within the duration of 6 months. The study population

includes all master level physiotherapists. Material required for the study is Google form, mobile/laptop, internet, pen, paper.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the concerned ethical committee, College of Physiotherapy, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune. Participants were approached using Google Questionnaire. The aim and objectives of the study were explained. Participants willing to participate in the study were included according to inclusion and exclusion criteria. The consent form was given to those who wished to participate in the study. The questionnaire was filled out by the subjects selected. Data were analysed.

Inclusion Criteria: Physiotherapists who have completed Master of Physiotherapy from Indian Universities, 23 to 40year old, both Male and Female.

Exclusion Criteria: Participants from International Universities, therapists not willing to participate, therapists above 40year old.

Outcome Measure: Self Made Questionnaire.

RESULT

Table No. 01

Age Group	No. of Individuals	Percentage
23-28	35	58%
29-34	19	32%
35-40	6	10%

Interpretation: Table no. 1 shows that 58% of participants belong to the age group 23 - 28 years, 32% of participants belong to 28 - 34 years age group and remaining 10% of participants belong to 34 - 40 years age group.

Table No. 02

Source for choosing a university for MPT	No. Of Individuals	Percentage
Friend/Senior	21	29%
Self-research	36	51%
Professor	14	20%

Interpretation: Table No. 02 shows that 29% of participants choose friend/senior, 51% of participants choose self-research

and 20% of participants choose professor as their source of reference for choosing a university for Master's program.

Table No. 03

Deciding factors for choosing a college for Master's	No. of Individuals	Percentage
Accompanying your friend	6	10%
No other option	5	8%
Checked for known reputation about this college from friend/senior	50	83%
Other	4	7%

Interpretation: Table No. 03 shows that 10% of participants showed interest for accompanying your friend, 8% of participants for no other option, 83% of participants for Known reputation about college from friend/senior and 7% of participants for other.

Table No.04

Master's Program Beneficial	No. of Individual	Percentage
YES	57	95%
NO	3	5%

Interpretation: Graph No. 03 shows that 95% of participants found their master's program beneficial and 5% of participants didn't find it beneficial.

Table No. 05

Influence of Master's degree on career	No. of Individuals	Percentage
Minus 10 to minus 5	1	1%
Minus 5 to Zero	0	0%
Zero to plus 5	10	17%
Plus 5 to plus 10	49	82%

Interpretation: Table no. 05 shows that 1% of participants choose a rating from minus 10 to minus 5, 0% of participants choose minus 5 to zero, 17% of participants choose zero to plus 5, 82% of participants choose plus 5 to plus 10.

Minus 10 to Minus 5: Poor
 Minus 5 to Zero: Fair
 Zero to Plus 5: Good
 Plus 5 to Plus 10: Excellent

DISCUSSION

Physical therapy is a specialist area that necessitates a high level of scientific

understanding and clinical expertise. There are rising expectations in the physiotherapy profession in terms of specialization and lifelong learning. Due to rising rivalry, clinical practice necessitates obtaining greater education in physical therapy. Obtaining higher education is one of the most important factors in developing physical therapy practice skills and for achieving success in clinical practice.

This has led to the increasing prominence of master-level study as a route for professional development. [12] A Physiotherapist from Indian background might be facing a lot of barriers that lead to descent for a Master's in Physiotherapy. Along with this, there is a dearth of informative platforms for higher education avenues after completing a Master's in India. Despite this, little is known regarding the thought process of physiotherapists concerning the post-qualification studies. [12] Hence, there is the need to explore the career pathways of graduates and the influence of Master's education on their careers. This study set out to establish barriers and facilitators faced by Indian Physiotherapists and establish influence and awareness related to Master's education. This will also help provide future prospects after BPT to help the huge field of Physiotherapy.

In compliance with the Questionnaire, participants have been invited from Indian universities have complete their Master's education. Most of the students who wanted to chase post-graduation in physiotherapy seemed to be interested in doing so in India. The study was done at Mangalore also indicates that a majority of students choose to work in India instead of migrating abroad, thus it discredits the credence that physiotherapy was selected as a career with an aim of emigration. [13]

Our results suggest that physiotherapists in India support the offering of a clinical master's degree in physiotherapy in their province and that physiotherapists who have been aged from

23 to 40 years of age should be the target audience for this type of programme. Thus, the curriculum ensures the inclusion of material essential to the success of less experienced physiotherapists. [14] Supporting graph no 1 58% of participants were aged between 23 to 28 years of age, 32% of participants aged between 28 to 34 years and 10% of participants from 24 to 40 years of age.

Supporting table no. 02 shows that 29% of participants choose friend/Senior, 51% of participants choose self - research and 20% of participants choose professor as their source of reference for choosing a university for a Master's program. According to our findings, 51% of participants were aware of national universities that offer Master's programs. The high percentage of self-research results could be attributed to similar articles attempting to raise awareness among undergraduates and determine the impact of master's degrees on postgraduate career paths.

Supporting table no. 03 shows that 10% of participants showed interest in accompanying your friend, 8% of participants for no other option, 83% of participants for Known reputation about college from friend/senior and 7% of participants for other as a deciding factor for choosing current/last college of Masters. Similar results were obtained from a study done by Qamar in 2017 depicting known reputation and academic program as a major criterion for choosing the university. [15] There are various institutions that make it mandatory for employees being graduated with a Postgraduate degree putting institutions and staff at a higher level, by inevitably being intellectual and skilled. [16]

Supporting table no. 04 shows that 95% of participants found their master's program to be beneficial and 5% of participants did not find it to be beneficial. The result obtained from a study depicts that 33.33% of participants strongly agreed and 66.66% of participants agreed on post-graduation programs to be interesting. [4]

Also, according to a study, having a Master's degree has contributed to improvements in teaching, research, and clinical skills. [9]

Supporting table no.05 shows how acquiring a Master's degree from current university influenced their career, whereas 1% of participants choose ratings from minus 10 to minus 5(Poor), 0% of participants choose minus 5 to zero(Fair), 17% of participants choose 0 to plus 5(Good) and 82% of participants choose plus 5 to plus 10(Excellent).

When participants in the current study were asked to describe their Master's program, they reported that it was mostly research-oriented, with knowledgeable academic staff and patient exposure. It was well-organized and focused on several types of learning. In terms of evidence-based practice, it was difficult. Some stated that specializing permits us to become masters in a specific field. Overall, it received a strong reaction in terms of Master's program enrolment.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that 95% of participants found the Master's program beneficial.

Limitation:

1. The sample size was less.
2. Only the age group 23-40 was targeted.
3. Participants pursuing Master in Physiotherapy were not included.

Future Scope:

1. A similar study can be done with participants holding Indian citizenship, who are pursuing or have completed a Master's degree from International Universities.
2. A similar study can be done with participants holding a bachelor of physiotherapy degree but have a Master's degree in a field other than Physiotherapy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to my principal and guide for allowing me to do this research and for their unwavering support. Advice, assistance, and support from the guide were invaluable in helping me better grasp my project. I would like to express my gratitude to all the participants for their active and earnest engagement in my research. I'd like to take this occasion to express my gratitude to my co-workers who helped me out when I needed it. All of you have my heartfelt gratitude.

Conflict of Interest: None

Source of Funding: None

Ethical Approval: Approved

REFERENCES

1. Irwin-Curruthers S. World confederation for physical therapy.
2. Green A, Perry J, Harrison K. The influence of a postgraduate clinical master's qualification in manual therapy on the careers of physiotherapists in the United Kingdom. *Manual therapy*. 2008 Apr 1;13(2):139-47.
3. Gosling S. Physiotherapy and postgraduate study. *Physiotherapy*. 1997 Mar 1;83(3):131-5.
4. Gosling S. Physiotherapy and postgraduate study: a follow-up discussion paper. *Physiotherapy*. 1999 Mar 1;85(3):117-21.
5. McClaran A. The renewal of quality assurance in UK Higher Education. *Perspectives*. 2010 Oct 1;14(4):108-13.
6. Loeffler IJ. The drawbacks of overspecialization. *Journal of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh*. 1999 Feb;44(1):11
7. Pratt R. The challenge of specialization: the Australian experience. *Collegian*. 1994 Jan 1;1(1):6-13.
8. Maitland GD. The development and possible future of manipulative therapy in Australia. *Australian Journal of Physiotherapy*. 1980 Apr 1;26(2):63-6.
9. Stathopoulos I, Harrison K. Study at master's level by practicing physiotherapists. *Physiotherapy*. 2003 Mar 1;89(3):158-69.
10. Moore D. Australian College of Physiotherapists: Fifth Presentation of Fellows, Perth, November 1994. *Aust J Physiother*. 1985;31(57):60.
11. Owen G. Extended scope practitioners in orthopaedic out patient clinics: a growing field in the UK. *REHAB International*. 1998;48:33-4.
12. Glover P, Bulley C, Howden S. Influences on physiotherapists when deciding to study at Masters level: An exploratory study. *Advances in Physiotherapy*. 2008 Jan 1;10(1):14-20.
13. Jain R, Menezes RG, Chawla P, Rao PJ, Kotian MS, Jain A. Career choice among physiotherapy students at Mangalore, India. *Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research*. 2011 May 6;5(2):344-6.
14. Sran MM, Murphy S. Postgraduate physiotherapy training: interest and perceived barriers to participation in a clinical master's degree programme. *Physiotherapy Canada*. 2009 Oct;61(4):234-43.
15. Qamar MM, Rasul A, Tariq M, Basharat A, Khaliq I, Azam K, Iqbal R, Khalid R, Farooq R, Shmashi M. An Analysis Of Physical Therapy Student's Attitude Towards Pursuing Higher Education In Pakistan. *Medical Channel*. 2017 Jul 1;23(3).
16. Deshpande M. Higher Education Following Completion Of Bachelors Of Physiotherapy—A Narrative Review. *Turkish Journal of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation*.;32:3.

How to cite this article: Munot PV, Deshpande M, Pawar P. Perspective of physiotherapist in and around Pune, India with regard to acquiring master's degree - a survey based study. *Int J Health Sci Res*. 2022; 12(3): 409-414. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijhsr.20220354>
