

A Study of Perception and Efficacy of Clinical Educators About Clinical Education During Clinical Posting (CP) of Physiotherapy Students: A Cross-Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: In Physiotherapy hands-on and clinical reasoning skill plays important role in quality of services they provide. Clinical postings (CP) are believed crucial in developing such skills under supervision of Clinical Educators. Still there is little information available about conducting and/or evaluating the efficacy of CP. Lacking in efficacy in clinical posting can directly affect the quality of learning in Physiotherapy. So, the need of study arises. Self-efficacy is defined as the self-perceived ability to perform a task. In the current study perception about the roles and responsibilities of a clinical educator and self-efficacy of clinical educators about providing clinical teaching during CP of physiotherapy students was evaluated.

Method: In this cross-sectional study, total 37 participants were included. Participants after providing their consent were asked to fill the Self-Efficacy of Clinical Teachers (SECT) tool. SECT is a self-administered questionnaires which is a reliable and valid tool to evaluate efficacy of clinical educators.

Result: Out of total 37 participant 43% 50% and 38% participant found moderately confident for 'Customizing Teaching to Learning needs', 'Teaching Prowess' and 'Impact on Learner's Development' domains of SECT tool. 43% of clinical educator perceive their role as 'Only clinician' and 45.94% participant expressed they received their job objectives which were only about patients' treatment.

Conclusion: Clinical educators found moderate confident in providing clinical learning. There were no any inabilities found in clinical educators to provide clinical learning. Still there is a scope of further research in this area.

Keywords: Clinical Posting (CP), Clinical educators, Physiotherapy

INTRODUCTION

Physiotherapy, also known as physical therapy is a profession dealing with human physical health and functional status. It required a good professional training and the quality of treatment received by patient is directly associated with the training one receives during the education.⁽¹⁾ Clinical education can be defined as clinical Education in clinical environments under supervision of clinical educator.⁽²⁾ A clinical educator is a professional who is qualified and will training the students for such skill,

clinical education is critically essential during the course education.⁽³⁾ It involves but are not limited to skill-based leaning e.g. clinical reasoning skills, critical decision-making skills, hands-on techniques. It additional trains the student to develop non therapeutic skills such as documentation, communication, professional ethics and values etc., hence it is understandable that clinical teaching is different from traditional classroom teaching and yet it is equally important.^(4,5) For competency based education clinical training play a significant

role.^(3,6) During clinical education students are exposed to various type of environment for training which includes direct participation in patients’ treatment of in-patient and outpatient departments, emergency centers of hospitals etc. ^(1,2)

The role of clinical educator is well established yet there is no research conducted assessing the same, hence the need of study arises. The aim of the current Study is to evaluate perception and efficacy of Clinical Educators about clinical education during clinical posting (CP) of Physiotherapy students

MATERIALS & METHODS

In this cross-sectional study, evaluation of self-efficacy of clinical educators to provide clinical education to physiotherapy students during clinical positing was done using Self-Efficacy in Clinical Teaching (SECT) questionnaire which is a valid and reliable tool.⁽⁷⁾ Self-Efficacy in Clinical Teaching (SECT) questionnaire comprise of total 22 questions under 3

domains which are 'Customising Teaching to Learning needs', 'Teaching Prowess' and 'Impact on Learner's Development'. The participant grades their level of confidence on scale of 1 to 7 where 7 is most confident to 1 is least confident. Their perception about their role as a clinical educator additional to just a clinician was tested through semi-structured questions through a google form. The form was circulated through various mediums to the clinical educators of Gujarat state. Total 37 clinical educators who were directly involved in planning and execution of clinical teaching through clinical posting, participated in the study.

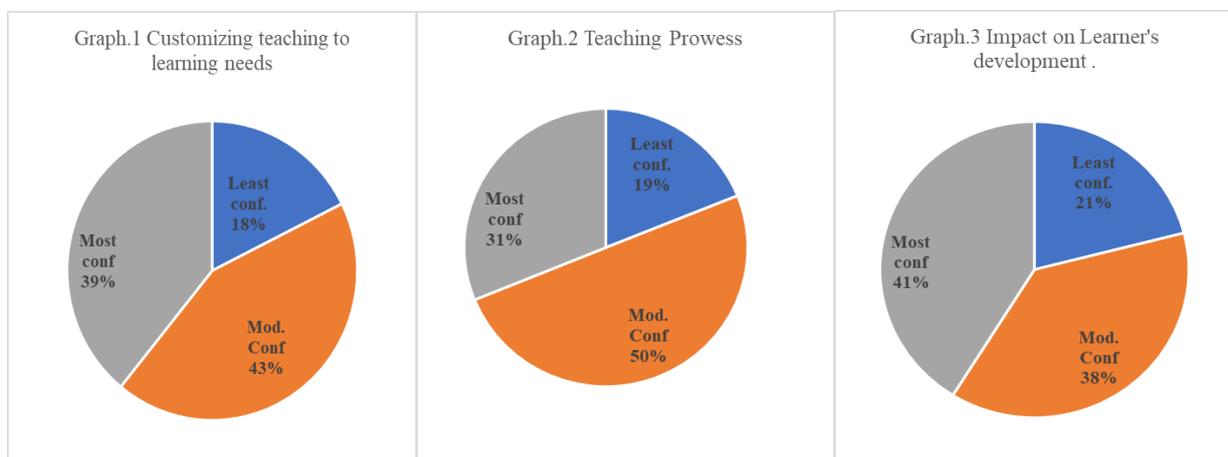
RESULT

In the current study data was analysed using Microsoft excel-Windows 11 version 22H2. The basic details of participants are described in table 1. Maximum number of participants were designated as Assistant or Associate professor (48.64%).

Designation	Highest Qualification	Year of Exp
Principal	Ph.D.	>10 years
Asi/Aso. Prof	MPT	6-10 year
cli. therapist	BPT	0-5 years

In the analysis of SECT tool, for the domain need maximum number of participants graded their confidence as moderate for customizing teaching to learning (39%) for teaching prowess (31%) and for impact on

learner’s development (41%). Participant graded their confidence as least for customizing teaching to learning needs. Description of domain wise result is given in graphs below.



When the perception of clinical educator was assessed, it was found that only 43% participant perceived their role as clinical educator and consider clinical teaching as their primary responsibility. Additionally, 45.94% participant expressed they received their job objectives which were about patients' treatment and not about clinical teaching. Details of description of their

perception is given in table.2. Other than this, some of the other observations were made while assessing perception such as only 8% of clinical educators mentioned tasks or assignment given to the students are based on their year of study and need of learning, only 3% of clinical educators evaluate at the end of posting to check whether the learner has met the objective of posting or not

Primary role in clinical education		Primary responsibility		Do you have your job objectives for Clinical teaching	
Clinical Educator as a posting planner	27.02%	Clinical teaching – Planning	24.05%	yes, for clinical teaching	19.01%
clinical Educator in clinics	15.98%	clinical teaching along with patient's treatment in clinics	19.2%	yes, but about patient's treatment, not about clinical teaching	45.94%
Only clinician	57%	Patient's treatment	56.75%	No	35.05%

DISCUSSION

Physiotherapy is a skills-based health care profession hence quality of treatment may directly get affected by the hands-on skills of a therapist and clinical posting plays a role in developing such skills in students of this course.⁽⁸⁾ Clinical educator may not give formal teaching but it is responsibility of a clinical educator to establish a student teacher relationship (in clinical environment), simulate logical thinking and making student understand the relationship between theory and practice on field. Role of clinical educator is multifaceted as their role and responsibilities towards patients and students are different. ⁽⁹⁾ Efficiency of clinical education depends on several factors, primarily on efficacy of clinical educators to teach within clinical set up and perception of his role as clinical educator (other than clinician).⁽⁴⁾ Self-efficacy is belief of an individual's own ability to execute the task and perform required actions so the desired outcomes can be achieved.⁽¹⁰⁾

The current study was aimed at evaluating perception and self-efficacy of clinical educators. In the result it was observed that 18 to 20% of clinical educators falls in to least confident category in all domains of SECT tool. Their perception about their role as 'only clinician' and unavailability of objectives as a clinical educator could be some of reason of their feeling less-least confident. Rosalie Bennett in her study

concluded that role of clinical educators has a major impact on one's personal and professional development in physiotherapy profession and they can bring a significant difference in clinical learning environment.⁽⁹⁾ Hence it is important that clinical educators are made aware about their roles, responsibilities towards learners and should be provided clear and considers learning objectives to be fulfilled during clinical posting. The current study was conducted in a small sample size and perception and efficacy were tested in a broad spectrum which are limiting factors.

CONCLUSION

There were no any inabilities found in clinical educators to provide clinical learning. Clinical educators found moderate confident in providing clinical learning. Clinical education is an essential part of one's professional development as a Physiotherapist, hence there is a scope of developing a structured way to provide and evaluate clinical posting to physiotherapy students in Gujarat.

Declaration by Authors

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