

AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS PHYSIOTHERAPY AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS: A PILOT SURVEY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Background: Physiotherapy is a health care profession. Physiotherapy plays a significant role in all levels of health. The higher secondary students are potential students for Bachelor of Physiotherapy programme. It is important to have good awareness and positive attitude about various occupation and professions that are related to his/her field of study. This study aimed at identifying the awareness level and their attitude about the profession which may provide adequate information to strategize the measures to enhance it further.

Objective: To study the awareness and attitude about Physiotherapy among higher secondary students.

Materials and Methods: A survey was conducted using a questionnaire that was modified and adapted with permission from a similar study done by Thusharika D. Dissanyaka. Forty five higher secondary students with science group from Sakthi tuition center, Thanjavur participated in this study. The questionnaire was analyzed and interpreted.

Results: Only 9% aware of all four (Manual therapy, Ice/heat therapy, hydrotherapy, electrotherapy & exercise therapy) components of Physiotherapy. The most commonly known treatment means of Physiotherapy is manual therapy followed by exercise therapy and electrotherapy and the least awareness is about hydrotherapy technique. The highest number of respondents (80%) replied Physiotherapy is used in musculoskeletal conditions, and only 17% replied Physiotherapy is used in paediatrics.

Conclusion and Clinical Implication: The awareness about the profession is less satisfactory. Appropriate measures have to be taken to increase the awareness and create a good attitude towards the Physiotherapy profession.

KEY WORDS: Physiotherapy, Awareness, Attitude, Higher secondary students.

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INTRODUCTION

Physiotherapy is a very dynamic health care profession. Physiotherapy is a well-recognized profession worldwide. Physiotherapy techniques and treatment helps in the management of various impairments and disabilities. Physiotherapy

can be used to treat various conditions from Paediatric age group to geriatric age group. Physiotherapy management techniques can be used in all specialities include: Orthopaedics, Neurology, Cardio-Respiratory, Obsterics & Gynaecology. In the time of 1st world war Physiotherapy took a firm base [1]. In India, the first

school & centre for Physiotherapy was established at Mumbai in 1957 with technical support by World Health Organisation [2].

In Indian education system generally students pursue the Physiotherapy course after their higher secondary course. The higher secondary course has various branches of studies such as science, Computer science, Commerce. The students from science background are eligible to pursue health courses such as Medicine, Physiotherapy & Nursing. It is indispensable for the higher secondary students to have appropriate knowledge about the above courses in order to select those courses as their career. In a nutshell the higher secondary students from science field are the future Physiotherapists of India. It is important to them to have appropriate awareness and a positive attitude about the profession. According to Super's developmental theory, individuals between the ages 15 and 24 years are at the exploration stage of their development. This phase is characterized by the making of tentative choices and skill development.

In recent days, though the awareness about the Physiotherapy profession is increasing, still the complete awareness is not achieved. The common myths prevailing among the people are Physiotherapy treatment is commonly used in musculoskeletal conditions. Physiotherapist uses mainly electro modalities. The above myths may under estimate the scope of the profession and practice.

The availability of factual information about the profession is an influential factor in making career decisions. It is mandatory for the policy makers to give appropriate information about the various professions to the higher secondary students so that it would be useful in choosing their career pathway. We hope this study will provide an insight about the awareness and attitude towards the Physiotherapy profession that in turn helps the education policy makers to consider the means to increase the awareness of the profession.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials: A survey was conducted using a questionnaire that was modified and adapted with permission from a similar study done by

Thusharika D. Dissanyaka *.The questionnaire consist of three Parts (Part A, Part B, Part C).Part A consists of subjective information. Part B consists of seven close ended questions. Part C consists of a close ended question with multiple options.

METHODOLOGY: Sampling: Convenience sampling, Sample size: 45 (Males & Females), Study location: Sakthi tuition Centre, Thanjavur.

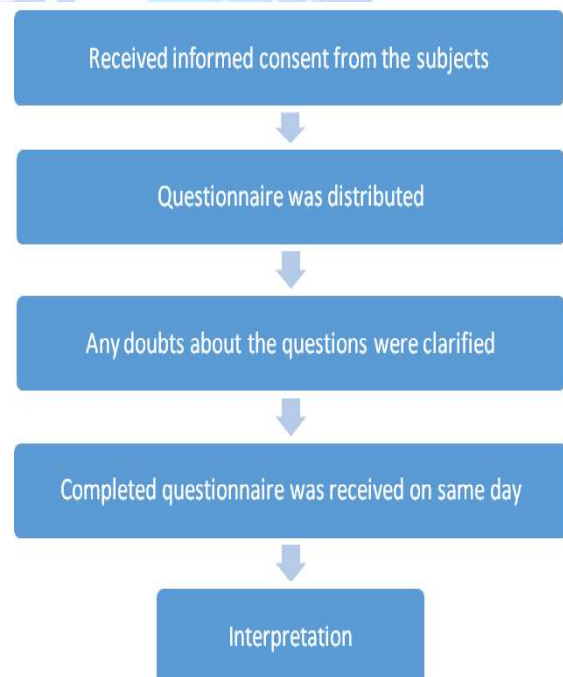
Selection criteria:

Inclusion criteria: Higher secondary students 1st year and second year, Science group students (Students who opted to study Physics chemistry Biology in higher secondary was selected), Students with English has the medium of instruction.

Exclusion criteria: Unwilling subjects and Non –Science group students.

PROCEDURE:

As shown in the flow chart.



RESULTS AND TABLES

Demographics:

Table 1: Gender characteristics of respondents.

Gender	Nos	Percentage
Male	13	28.89
Female	32	71.11
Total	45	

The table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents. A total of 45 respondents

consist of 13 (28.89%) male and 32 (71.11%) female participated in the study.

Table 2: Level of Higher secondary education.

Higher secondary	Nos	Percentage
1 st Year	36	80
2 nd Year	9	20
Total	45	

Table 2 illustrates 36 students from higher secondary first year and 9 students from higher secondary second year participated in the study. Response rate: The questionnaire was distributed to 45 respondents. All the 45 respondents completed the questionnaire and returned to the researcher on the same day (Response rate: 100 %)

Awareness about Physiotherapy: The questions related to awareness of Physiotherapy was provided in Part B.

Table 3: Basic awareness about physiotherapy.

1. Physiotherapy is,	Correct answer %
practiced by the doctors	42.22
Acupuncture is a branch of Physiotherapy	37.77
Masseurs are physiotherapists.	44.44
an indigenous treatment method.	24.44

Only less than 50% gave correct answer to the question related to general awareness of Physiotherapy. 44.44% replied that masseurs are not Physiotherapist. Only 42.22% informed Physiotherapy is not practiced by doctors. Many students (>75%) informed Physiotherapy is an indigenous treatment method.

Table 4: Role of Physiotherapy.

2. Physiotherapy,	Correct answer %
involved in rehabilitation of injuries	57.78
helps in improving quality of life of injured person	84.44
helps in improving fitness level of sportsmen.	48.89
helps in regaining activities of daily living.	71.11

The awareness about role of Physiotherapy is good, except the role of Physiotherapy in the improvement of fitness level of sports person (48.89%).The students have moderate awareness in the role of Physiotherapy in improving the fitness level of sports person.

Table 5: Components of Physiotherapy Unit.

3. A Physiotherapy unit includes	Correct answer %
a gymnasium with exercising machines, gym balls and other equipment.	26.67
electrical modalities	44.44
a section for manual treatments using bandages, tapes and splints	17.78
a therapeutic pool	40

The awareness about the component of Physiotherapy unit is not satisfactory. Many students believe Physiotherapy unit comprises of electrical modalities (44.44%) followed by therapeutic pool (40%).Very minimal number(17.78%) of students replied bandages, tapes and splints as a component in Physiotherapy unit.

Table 6: Physiotherapy service provider.

4. Places to get physiotherapy services,	Correct Answer
private clinics	66.67
government hospitals	57.78
private hospitals	71.11
NGOs	15.56

Good awareness is noticed regarding the service provider of Physiotherapy except for NGO (15.56)

Table 7: Modes of Physiotherapy treatment.

5. Physiotherapy include	Yes
Manual therapy	82.22
ice/ heat therapy	37.78
Hydrotherapy	28.89
electrotherapy and exercise therapy	75.56

Many students aware about manual therapy (82.22%) followed by electro therapy and exercise therapy (75.56%). The awareness about ice/heat therapy and hydrotherapy is not satisfactory.

Table 8: Consultation of team Physiotherapist.

6. Do you know when to meet the team physiotherapist?	Correct answer
When you have an injury.	73.33
When there is pain arising in any part with or without a known cause	77.78
When you feel pain or discomfort in any of the sporting technique.	77.78
When you have fever or flu.	80

There is a very good awareness (>70) regarding when to meet the team Physiotherapist.

Table 9: Uses of Physiotherapy in Various Specialty.

7.Uses of physiotherapy in any other conditions than in sport injuries	
Neurological conditions	35.56
Pediatric conditions	17.78
Chest conditions (Cardio respiratory conditions)	22.22
Musculoskeletal conditions (Orthopaedic conditions)	80
Women's health (Obstetric & Gynecological conditions)	26.67

Among the various listed specialty listed, Students felt Physiotherapy is highly useful in Musculoskeletal condition (80%) followed by neurological conditions (35.56).It was noticed very poor awareness about the uses of Physiotherapy in women's health (26.67%) followed by Chest conditions (22.22) and the least is Pediatric conditions (17.78)

Sources of information about Physiotherapy:

The sources of information about Physiotherapy are analyzed based on the response provided in the Part C of questionnaire.

Table 10a, 10b: Sources of information about physiotherapy

10a. Personal contacts:

Family member was a client	20
Friend was a client	4.4
I was a client	2.2
Friend told me	33.33
My family physician told me	4.4
Family member is a Physiotherapist	6.67
Friend is a therapist	0

Many of the students (33.33%) aware about Physiotherapy by their friends and 20% of the students came to know about the Physiotherapy since their family member was a client.

10b. Mass Media

Television	44.44
Films	17.78
Internet	31.11
Newspaper or magazine	26.67
Books	28.89
Advertisements	35.56
Radio	2.2

It is evident from the survey that many students came to know about Physiotherapy from Television (44.44%) followed by advertisements (35.56%) and internet (31.1%).

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. Many of them believe Physiotherapy is practiced by doctors, it indirectly depicts Majority of the students are not aware physiotherapy is a unique profession and practiced by Physiotherapist. It is also noticed that student assumes masseurs are Physiotherapist, But the fact is Physiotherapist practice massage as a part of their treatment technique on the other hand all masseurs are not Physiotherapist. When we compare with similar studies done by Shimpachiro [3] in japan among ishikawa high school students it was noted 58% of respondents were believed to have had some knowledge in Physiotherapy. Whereas in the study conducted in high school students in Sri Lanka more than 63% of them were unaware about physiotherapy profession & its applications in patient management [4]. Hence similar trend is noticed among the students in Japan and in Sri Lanka. The awareness seems to be coherent to the similar study conducted at Meerut (India) in which 41% of higher secondary students had an idea about Physiotherapy [5].

In contradict to the first finding (awareness about physiotherapy), it was inferred satisfactory awareness about the role of Physiotherapy except the role of physiotherapy in the improvement of fitness level of sportsperson. 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. The awareness about other modalities other than electrical modality is not satisfactory. Many students believe physiotherapist uses electrical modality more than manual techniques, exercise equipment. Similar result but a very high awareness about electrical modality (95%) is noticed in the similar study conducted in srilanka [6].

In difference to the above finding many students aware about manual therapy (82.22%) followed by electro therapy and exercise therapy (75.56%) as a mode of Physiotherapy treatment. The awareness about ice/heat therapy and hydrotherapy is not satisfactory. This is highly controversial to the previous finding Many students believe Physiotherapy unit comprises of electrical modalities (40%) followed by therapeutic pool (40%). Very minimal number(17.78%) of students replied bandages, tapes and splints as a component in Physiotherapy unit. This results shows the students are not very clear about the mode of Physiotherapy treatment and component of Physiotherapy unit. Only 8% aware of all four (Manual therapy, Ice/heat therapy, hydrotherapy, electrotherapy & exercise therapy) components of Physiotherapy.

Though only less than half of the samples aware that Physiotherapy can improve the fitness level of sports person, there is a good awareness about when to meet the team Physiotherapist.

It is evident from the study most of the respondents aware of Physiotherapy is useful in Musculoskeletal conditions. 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. Not even single respondent aware that Physiotherapy useful in all the above mentioned specialty.

The main source of information about Physiotherapy is friends followed by the family members who were clients for Physiotherapy treatment. The students came to know about physiotherapy mainly by television, advertisement and internet. However the fact is student not achieved adequate knowledge about the profession, hence the Physiotherapy professional should use the media and internet to give clear awareness about the profession. Abd Razak Zakara [9] implicate the existing higher secondary curriculum in Malaysia should be revised by introducing Physiotherapy. Riju [10] emphasized

that there is a need for a programme for school children in Anand city of India to educate them about Physiotherapy.

According to Ginzberg (1972) [11] theory, between early to late adolescent is the period in which career choice is made. According to Super's developmental theory, individuals between the ages 15 and 24 years are at the exploration stage of their development. This phase is characterized by the making of tentative choices and skill development. 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.

CONCLUSION

The students have a moderate awareness about Physiotherapy, The awareness about the role of Physiotherapy in specialties other than orthopaedics is not satisfactory, Television has been identified as the major source of information about the Physiotherapy.

Further Recommendation:

Measures 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. This study can be studied in a large scale and the factors attributing to the awareness can be studied.

Limitations:

The major limitation is sample size. The findings of this study can be related to one group of higher secondary students.

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Conflicts of interest: None

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