

AWARENESS ABOUT PHYSIOTHERAPY AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF ANAND DISTRICT

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Abstract: My aim and objective is to evaluate the awareness of physiotherapy among high school children of Anand district of Gujarat and to get their reviews about physiotherapy treatment. The method and materials that are used are a questionnaire was randomly distributed among 150 students of different schools. It comprised of 10 questions related to physiotherapy awareness. Data were collected and statistically analyzed. The results which are being found are; 64% had previous knowledge of physiotherapy services while 36% participants had no such knowledge. The sources of information about physiotherapy services included information obtained from doctors 66.66%, relatives 8.33%, friends 6.25%, and teachers 18.75%. Of the 64% participants who had previous knowledge of physiotherapy, 62.5% were of the opinion that it is a treatment of orthopedic conditions, 12.5% thought that it is treatment for neurological conditions, 3.13% considered it as treatment for conditions related to heart while 21.87% expressed the view that it is useful for all the above conditions. The conclusion of the taken research was observed as; the students were not much aware of physiotherapy as a treatment method and its applications in disease conditions other than orthopedic conditions. Doctors were the most cited source of information for physiotherapy. There is a need for a program to educate the school children in Anand city of Gujarat and make them familiar about Physiotherapy both as a mode of treatment and as a prospective career pathway.

Key Words: Physiotherapy, Orthopedic, Treatment, Geographical area, Quality of life.

Introduction:

Physiotherapy is a health care profession that helps in the treatment of various impairments and disabilities. According to Chartered Society of Physiotherapy it is a dynamic profession which uses a range of treatment techniques to restore movement and function within the body. They also work to combat a broad range of physical problems, in particular those associated with neuromuscular, musculoskeletal, cardiovascular and respiratory systems. According to World Confederation for Physical, Physiotherapy is an internationally recognised health profession which may be practiced by qualified and, where required by state or national legislation duly registered or licensed physiotherapists only. Physiotherapy is an essential part of health care delivery system¹, it is practiced independently of other health care providers and also within inter-disciplinary rehabilitation programs for the restoration of optimal function and quality of life in individuals with loss and disorders of movement^{2, 3}. Physiotherapy is a growing profession in Anand city, Gujarat. The services are not readily available in some parts because there is less awareness and less practicing physiotherapists for a population. These few physiotherapists provide services either in public hospitals or private clinics, or in rehabilitation centers, or provide home services. Physiotherapists offer comprehensive care for patients with diverse medical and surgical conditions

such as arthritis, burns, pain disorders, paediatrics disorders, pulmonary disorders, neurological disorders, cardiac disorders, trauma, and sport injuries⁴. Although physiotherapy has a great role to play in the society, there is very less awareness regarding it among all age groups of people in Anand. We are targeting the high school children who are about to choose their career in our study. How can the physiotherapy profession be made known and utilized by the public if a pool of aspiring profession seekers is not aware of its existence? A number of studies have been conducted to ascertain the general public's awareness and knowledge of physiotherapy^{5, 6}. In Anand city of Gujarat, there have been many attempts to raise general level of awareness about physiotherapy. This survey was undertaken to assess the level of awareness and knowledge about physiotherapy among the high school children in Anand district located in Gujarat state of India.

Aims and Objectives:

The main aim of this study was to find the awareness about physiotherapy among high school children in Anand district.

Materials and Methods:

Research Design: Descriptive study

Sampling Method: Convenient sampling

Population: High school children from various schools of Anand district

Inclusion Criteria: Children of age group 13 years to 17 years.

Method of collection of data:

Data was collected with a survey questionnaire which comprised 10 closed ended questions divided into two sections. Section A contained questions on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Sections B contained items which evaluated awareness and knowledge of physiotherapy among the high school children.

Sample size and method:

A sample of 150 high school children was selected for the study by non-probability convenient sampling technique.

Measurement tools

Questionnaire

Statistical analysis

The collected data will be analyzed by frequency and percentage.

Results:

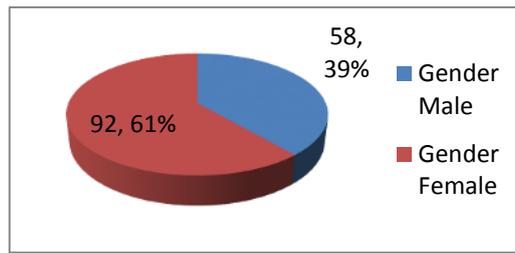


Figure 1 shows demographic characteristics of respondents. A total of 150 respondents comprising 92 (61.33%) females and 58 (38.66%) males participated in the study..

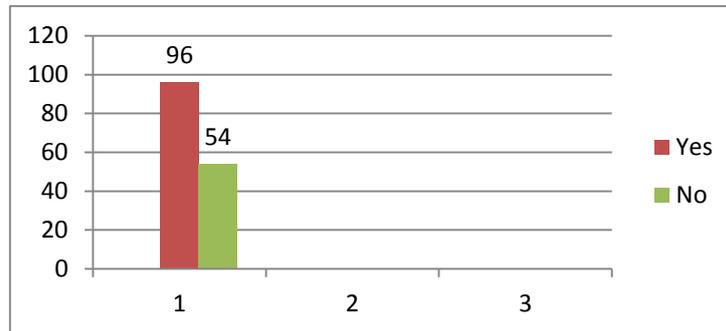


Figure 2 shows number of students that have heard about physiotherapy. 96 participants (64%) had previous knowledge of physiotherapy services while 54 (36%) participants had no such knowledge.

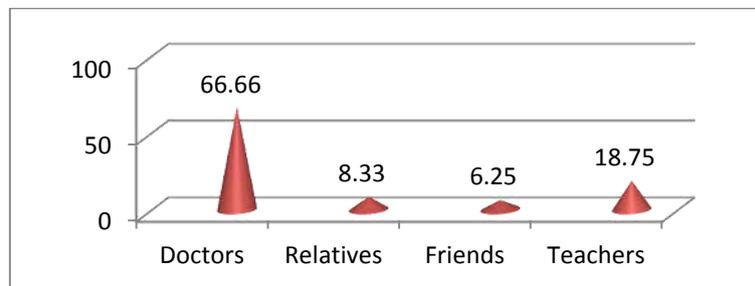


Figure 3 shows source of information. The sources of information about physiotherapy services included information obtained from doctors 66.66%, relatives 8.33%, friends 6.25%, and teachers 18.75%

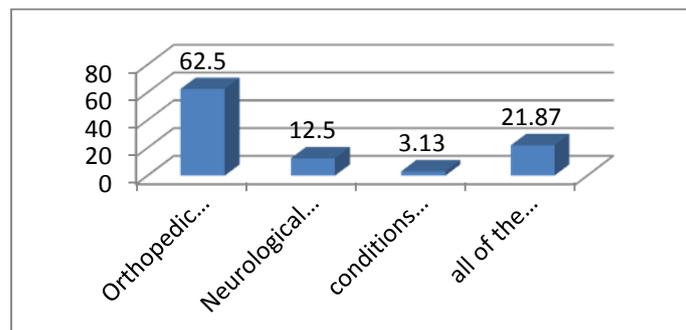


Figure 4 shows knowledge of students regarding conditions treated with physiotherapy. Of the 96 participants who had previous knowledge of physiotherapy, 62.5% were of the opinion that it is a treatment of orthopedic conditions, 12.5% thought that it is treatment for neurological conditions, 3.13% considered it as treatment for conditions related to heart while 21.87% expressed the view that it is useful for all the above conditions.

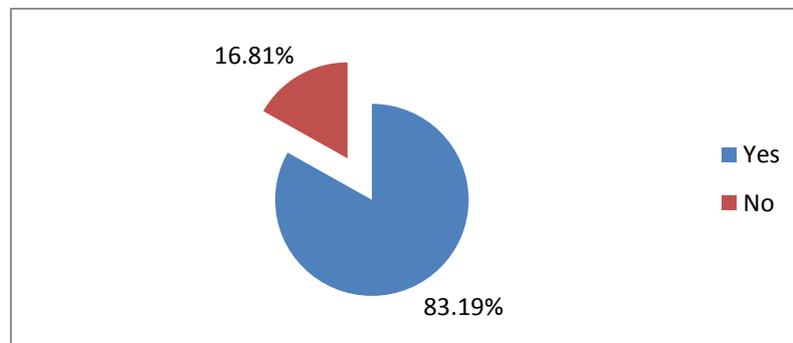


Figure 5 shows whether students will recommend physiotherapy treatments for various problems. 83.19% respondents would recommend physiotherapy and 16.81% will go for some other type of treatment.

Discussion:

This study was undertaken to assess the level of awareness and knowledge about physiotherapy services among the high school children in Anand district. A large number of respondents in this study had previous knowledge of physiotherapy. Most of them acquired the knowledge through information obtained from doctors. Also, most of them were of the opinion that physiotherapy is a treatment for only orthopedic problems. A very small number of respondents had the idea that physiotherapy can be one of the treatments for heart problems. A large number of the respondents will recommend physiotherapy as a treatment. The small sample size was a notable limitation of the study. Also, the small geographical area covered by the survey entails that care should be exercised in comparing results of the study with those of other studies.

In Europe, majority of the public are aware of physiotherapy services and have knowledge on what the profession entails, such that there is a high demand for the services of physiotherapists among the people⁷. In Australia, physiotherapists enjoy professional autonomy and the level of awareness is high^{8, 9, 10}. In Japan, many high school students lack appropriate information about the physiotherapy profession and are therefore unaware of the vast career opportunities open to them¹¹. In Ghana, anecdotal reports suggested low level of awareness and knowledge of physiotherapy, and it appears that the profession lacks a clear identity with the public despite the great role it plays in the society⁴. Same is the case with Anand. People of Anand are not aware that physiotherapy can come under first degree of referral. In this study, most respondents expressed the view that physiotherapists treat orthopedic disorders. This could be attributed to the large number of the referrals from orthopaedic

units of the hospitals. In effect, the populace are only able to view physiotherapy services along the lines of mobilization of stiff joints and strengthening of weak muscles. Hence, it is not surprising that the public would not be aware that physiotherapy services could be available for conditions other than those of the musculoskeletal system¹². A similar observation was made by Ogiwara and Nozoe (2005) in a study among high school students in Japan¹¹. Many of the participants in this study who had previous knowledge about physiotherapy services would recommend others to take the services of physiotherapists. This would suggest that they had a positive outlook about physiotherapy.

Conclusion:

Participants in this study demonstrated a moderate level of awareness of physiotherapy services. The students of Anand district need more information and awareness regarding physiotherapy, its uses in treating conditions other than orthopedic disorders. . There is a need for a program to educate the school children in Anand city of Gujarat about Physiotherapy both as a mode of treatment and as a prospective career pathway.

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