RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Awareness About Importance of Role of Physiotherapy in Non-Referred Clinical Conditions Amongst PG Residents

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Abstract

Introduction: Physiotherapy not only works on improving one's mobility but also looks upon working on functional status, and quality of life along with management of clinical manifestations with various therapeutic measures. Still, a majority of patient inflow depends upon the referrals given by medical consultants; hence, medical students and professionals need to be aware of the importance of the role of physiotherapy in a variety of clinical cases that are not often referred for physiotherapy. Improving the level of awareness among medical professionals is the ultimate way to improve patient prognosis and an adequate patient-centric approach to gain better treatment outcomes could be achieved. **Material and Methods**: 107 individuals participated in this study. Responses from these individuals were taken using a questionnaire. **Aim**: This study aims to raise awareness about the importance of the role of physiotherapy in non-referred clinical conditions in medical PG residents. **Results**: Out of 107 participants approached for the review, data suggested that 81.1% of the individuals lack awareness about the importance of physiotherapy in non-referred clinical conditions, while 18.9% are aware of the same. **Conclusion**: Research suggests that awareness about the importance of the role of physiotherapy in non-referred clinical conditions in medical PG residents is poor. A very minor percentage of the population is aware of the importance of physiotherapy in various aspects which is not known to many.

Keywords: Awareness, Clinical Conditions, Medical PGs/ Residents, Physiotherapy

1. Introduction

Physiotherapy is a prevalently emerging aspect in the medical field which works upon proper evaluation and assessment, diagnosis and management of various disorders and conditions. Physiotherapy has been understood as an important aspect of a multidisciplinary approach for treating various conditions in different specialities. The word "physical therapy" refers to a broad spectrum of treatment modalities, from more basic approaches such as applying heat or cold packs, massaging the body, training good posture, doing physical activity, and mobilisation, to more sophisticated ones such as laser therapy and transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation[1].

Among conservative therapies, physiotherapy has been authenticated as very successful. Conservative and reversible therapy techniques are advised for these patients, as the necessity for irreversible therapies, such as dental and surgical operations, is thankfully uncommon[1].

As a crucial therapeutic tool that uses established, scientifically-based protocols and is an important component in all patients, physiotherapy has emerged as

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both an important medical and rehabilitative complement in the delivery of medical treatment and a medical vocation (American Physical Therapy Association, 1997)[2]. Information and abilities specific to physical therapists are used in healthcare facilities, private practices, schools, sports, and workplace settings. It involves interactions between the physiotherapist, patients, families, communities, caregivers and other health professionals[3].

The medical field is a vast field with a broad spectrum of segments focusing on various conditions classified into special sub-fields. These subfields or specialities include general medicine, cardiology, pulmonology, neurology, orthopaedics, paediatrics, dermatology, surgery, dermatology, emergency medicine, ophthalmology, obstetrics, gynaecology, psychiatry, anaesthesiology, oncology, gastroenterology, nephrology, rheumatology, haematology, radiology, etc. This is how various departments deal with a variety of conditions accordingly. Similarly, Physical therapy is a field that also focuses on various aspects including musculoskeletal conditions, neurological conditions, cardiological conditions, pulmonological conditions, oncological conditions, paediatric conditions, community health, sports medicine, etc. As physiotherapy spreads across a broad spectrum of medical aspects, it is significant enough that there must be awareness about the same.

Still, in various regions, physiotherapy is only known for musculoskeletal problems and to a very small extent regarding the benefit and importance of physical therapy in other clinical conditions. Physiotherapy not only works on restoring and maintaining mobility but also works on other aspects like pain management, enhancement of quality of life, and functional status restoration, as well as aids in medical management.

The important point to understand and consider is that a large number of patients who seek physiotherapy are based on recommendations given by their respective physicians for physiotherapy treatment along with or after medical treatment. The common population is still in the process of becoming aware of physiotherapy, its importance and its role in various aspects and a variety of conditions. Here lies the vitality of awareness amongst the medical team that will be giving a reference for physiotherapy to be in-cooperated in the treatment or rehabilitation program. Patients are referred to physiotherapy but for limited conditions and cases. The part played by physical therapy in the conditions which are not referred to is to be focused on in this review. Before achieving complete awareness regarding the importance and role of physical therapy in diverse aspects amongst a common population, the same has to be achieved in medical professionals practicing at present and the most important channel for the patients to seek reach to a physiotherapist. Hence, medical residents must be aware of the physical therapist's role in an extensive range of clinical conditions.

Physiotherapy is not just constrained to post-operative management or just dealing with mobility issues but it also has a great role in managing several infectious conditions like COVID-19, in patients of leprosy, HIV/AIDS, preoperative patient preparation, in emergency departments for acute musculoskeletal cases, lifestyle modification programs, and a major role in enhancing the patient quality of life. The inclusion of a physical therapist in the interdisciplinary team of the emergency department may help deal with a variety of things. The requirement for teamwork, communication and coordination in the causality department is crucial and their contribution is closely related to the common notable goals of decreasing possible errors, eliminating or decreasing waiting periods and ensuring patient safety[4].The upcoming doctors need to be aware of the assessment techniques and proven treatment approaches used in scientific physiotherapy for the improvement of functional mobility along with the management of pain and other clinical manifestations[5].

Pre-operative rehabilitation, sometimes known as "pre-rehabilitation," is a tactic that is becoming more and more popular across a variety of patient demographics. It aims to enhance the physical as well as mental well-being of the patient before surgery to improve the patient's results after the procedure6.

Physiotherapy could be included in the emergency department for initial treatment of acute musculoskeletal conditions with a management approach of acute soft tissue injuries and other presentations of an acute musculoskeletal condition like pain, oedema, etc. Another aspect that physiotherapy has a role in is in pre-operative conditions like the pre-operative period of amputation or the pre-operative period of any general surgery cases for pre-operative assessment, general conditioning as well patient education and training for the surgery and the post-operative period[6].

Physiotherapy contributes to the multidisciplinary management of systemic diseases like diabetes mellitus, hypertension etc through various interventions including

exercise protocol, strengthening programs, aerobic conditioning, lifestyle modification, etc.

Rehabilitative care and physio-therapeutic engagement are becoming more and more necessary as HIV-positive individuals live longer and the virus becomes more prevalent. To keep raising the standard of care we provide for the individuals who tested positive for HIV, research into the application of physical therapy in this context is crucial[7].

Years back when covid-19 pandemic hit, the role of physical therapy manoeuvres had emerged all of a sudden and people started to recognize the importance of physical therapy in infectious conditions like COVID-19. Not just confined to some such aspects but there's a broad spectrum of cases in which physiotherapy has a role that would aid medical treatment and help in getting a better prognosis.

Physiotherapists have a great deal of challenge in this young and quickly evolving field of medicine. The disease's intricate multi-system manifestation calls for an all-encompassing and creative approach to treatment. Physiotherapy plays a vital part in respiratory, palliative, pain management, rehabilitation, and fitness maintenance[8].

Despite concerted efforts made throughout the world, kids being overweight or those who fall under the category of obesity are not understood well and are difficult to treat[9]. Physiotherapists are experts in movement and physical activity; therefore, they could help manage obese youngsters. However, the absence of rules particular to physiotherapy means that their significance is still uncertain[10].

2. Materials and Method

The study was an observational type of study with 107 participants. The review was conducted with the approval of the institutional ethics committee of the institution where the study was conducted. By reviewing the participants according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the sample population was selected. Participating individuals were given required brief about the study's protocol and consent with adequate information was gathered from the selected participants. Then questionnaire was given to the selected participants. Participants were given instructions to fill out the questionnaire after which the answers to the questions were recorded.

By analyzing the responses obtained statistical data was analyzed. Results and conclusion were determined. The entire process was carried out over a time duration of 6 months.

3. Ethical Committee Approval

The Institutional Ethics Committee of Krishna Vishwa Vidyapeeth, "Deemed to be University", Karad approved the study. Respondents were informed about the study and the questionnaire, and their consent was taken. They were also free to decline to answer any inquiries on the form. Collection of consent forms from every participant was done before beginning the study, and their privacy was taken care of in the entire procedure.

4. Study Design

It was a questionnaire-based survey with a simple random sampling method.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Participating candidates should be medical PG residents.
2. Participating candidates should be currently practicing in KVV, Karad.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Ayurveda professionals.
2. Homeopathy professionals.
3. Allied science professionals

5. Results

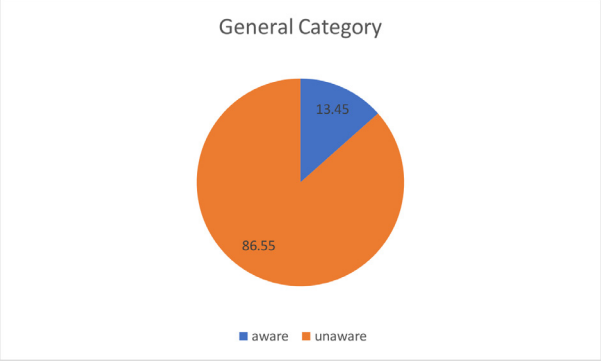


Figure 1. The general category question.

The category-wise question depicted that, the awareness percentage obtained for each involved aspect/category is as follows; 38.9% of the participated individuals were aware of the general category questions and 61.1% were unaware (Figure 1).

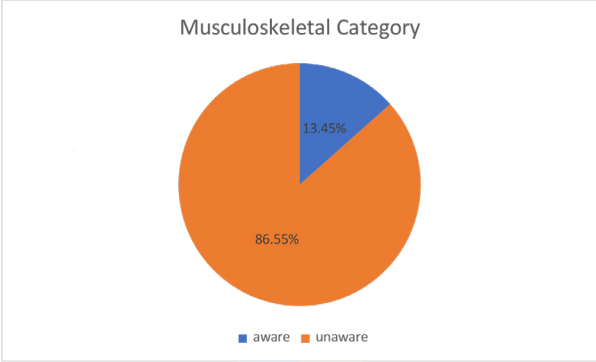


Figure 2. Questions from the musculoskeletal.

Questions from the musculoskeletal category suggested that 13.45% were aware and 86.55% were unaware (Figure 2).

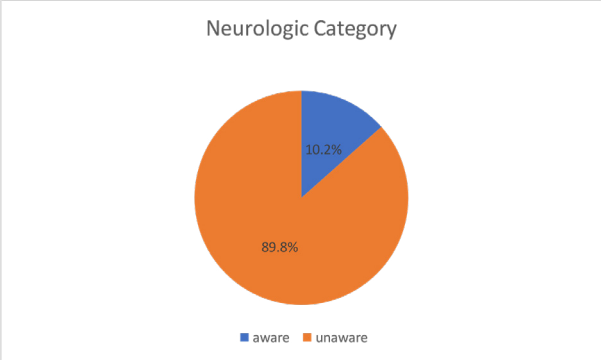


Figure 3. Question form neurologic category.

10.2% of the residents were aware and 89.8% were unaware of the neurologic category (Figure 3).

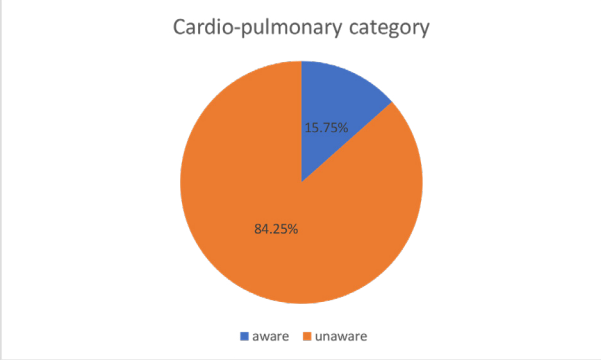


Figure 4. Question form Cardio-pulmonary category.

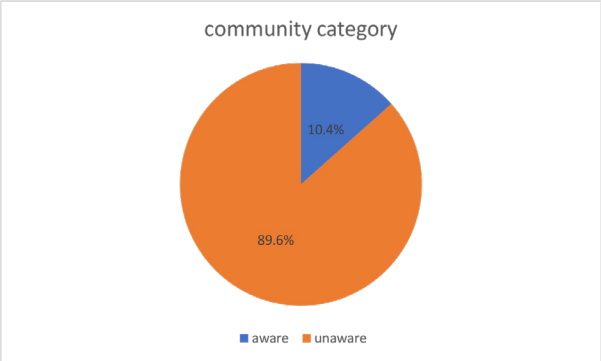


Figure 5. Questions from community category

Questions from the cardio-pulmonary category suggested that 15.75% were aware and 84.25% were unaware (Figure 4).

Lastly, 10.4% of residents were aware and 89.6% were unaware of the aspects of the community category (Figure 5).

The overall percentage of a participant who was aware of the significance of the role of physiotherapy in non-referred clinical conditions is18.9% whereas 81.1% of residents who participated were unaware.

6. Discussion

This study aims at the awareness level of the importance of physiotherapy in non-referred clinical conditions. The participating candidates chosen for this review were PG medical residents.

The prevalence of medical professionals being aware of the advances and role of physiotherapy in various medical conditions is less. A cross-sectional study on 180 medical residents depicted that the percentage of awareness among various fields of physiotherapy found were maximum for musculoskeletal physiotherapy i.e., 97%, followed by sports physiotherapy 93.8%, 86.6% for neuro-physiotherapy and the least was found for cardiovascular 68.8%, 67.7% for obesity, 66.1% for industrial health. In this mentioned study, awareness regarding various aspects of physiotherapy was checked.

This respective study was considered to be conducted to check the awareness regarding the role and possible contribution of physical therapy in the conditions of the respective medical departments that are not referred to physiotherapists for management. The participating candidates/residents were provided with the questionnaire and the results were noted.

The observations of the study depict that the knowledge about physiotherapy and its dimensions is the major part to begin with which lacks awareness. Students, residents and practitioners are not well aware of the broad resource that physiotherapy could be for various conditions. To start with, the role of physiotherapy that could be way too beneficial in the emergency department for handling acute musculoskeletal incomings is not known which possibly could be due to a lack of knowledge reading the acute management strategies that are practised by the therapists to manage them. Similarly, the role in various other aspects like pre- operative assessments and conditioning, possible management of migraine or tension headaches, lifestyle modifications with appropriate exercise programs designed according to the needs of the body as well as the underlying conditions like hypertension, role in analysing and modifying activities and workplace environment and giving ergonomic advice to prevent occupational hazards, improving quality of life in conditions like HIV/AIDS, management of childhood obesity, various pain management strategies in physiotherapy using a variety of modalities and techniques, etc., are some of the areas which could be well managed with better outcomes with the involvement of a physiotherapist. The major reason for the failure of reference to a physiotherapist is due the lack of knowledge about these possible management approaches.

The medical residents not being well acquainted with the potentials of physiotherapy as a profession and a medical care option as regards any other healthcare field from the beginning of their medical journey is one of the major factors affecting their awareness of the field and the references of patients.

The study results it-self show that a large number of the included folk were unaware of the possible contribution of physiotherapy in the patients and the clinical cases which are often not referred for physiotherapy treatment.

7. Conclusion

The hereby presented study leads to a conclusion that the level of awareness regarding the importance of the role of physiotherapy in non-referred clinical conditions amongst PG residents is less. The statistics show 81.1% of PG residents are unaware and 18.9% of them are well aware of the importance of physiotherapy in all the patients who are not sent or referred for now.

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