Original Research Article

Awareness of Physiotherapy in Medical Practioners at Rural Area

Abstract
Physiotherapy is primary health profession concerned with rehabilitation; in rehabilitation it is the
physiotherapist who helps disabled people to maximize their potential capabilities of achieving function&
independence for activities of ADL The aim of the present study was to find out the awareness of
physiotherapy in Doctors at rural area. Data was collected from self made questionnaire sent to doctors.
Descriptive statics was used to analyze the data. Findings from analysis states that 34% of doctors are
aware of physiotherapy services and its importance, physicians in practice longer were more knowledgeable but also
more conservative in their practices.

Keywords: Physiotherapy awareness, medical practioners, physiotherapy, rural Area.
1.0 Introduction
Physiotherapy has been defined as a dynamic health care profession with established theoretical & wide spread clinical application in the preservation, development & restoration of optimal physical functions\(^1\,\,2\). Physiotherapists are healthcare professionals concerned with the assessment, treatment & prevention of the dysfunction & impairments of movement in people of all ages & within a wide range of contexts. In rehabilitation it is the physiotherapists aim to help disabled people to maximize their potential capabilities of achieving function & independence for activities of daily living. The more accessibility a physiotherapists is to patients, the better is the survival of the profession as clients choices are from of social control\(^3\). Physicians have profound influence on other health professions including physiotherapy as they are the top of the pyramid of the health care professionals \(^5\,\,6\). The practice of prescribing physiotherapy by most physicians has been of great concern to physiotherapists worldwide \(^7\).“A Physician must understand the principles and methods that physiotherapists use. With the understanding, a physician can appropriately include therapy services and comprehensive diagnostic & treatment planning. However, it is not enough in having this information as there must be a clear & frequent communication between therapists & physicians” \(^8\). If a physician does not have accurate impression of what physiotherapist actually do then the available skills & services of physiotherapy will be underutilized and the patients will not receive the appropriate treatment that is required \(^11\). Traditionally, physiotherapy is based on a scientific philosophy shared with the medical profession. Physiotherapy as a profession is an occupation which requires specializations in various fields for the benefit of the society. Physiotherapy has evolved/grown for decades in our country & has reached at higher position because of the educational system, research & widespread practice. Hence the objective of study was to “assess the awareness & perception regarding physiotherapy in doctors at rural settings”.

2.0 Materials and methods
The nature of study was “Descriptive Questionnaire Based Study”. This study was carried out to evaluate the awareness of physiotherapy in 30 practioners, who have been working as physician or private practitioner for at least 5 years. The subjects were taken from Kadgaon, Vilad, Vadgaon Gupta, Pimpri, Dehare, Vadala and assessed by questionnaire consisting of various questions related to physiotherapy academics, general knowledge and awareness of physiotherapy services and referral of patients by physician.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physiotherapy Awareness</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Final Score</th>
<th>Total (in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>440</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>51.36 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Inclusion Criteria was
1. Individuals practicing as doctor,
2. Age group between 30 to 55 yrs,
3. Individuals who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

The total duration of study was one month and the procedure which was adapted was as follows
- Purpose and procedure was explained to the subject of study and written informed consent was taken to voluntarily participate in the study.
- Each subject was given a questionnaire in their local language.
- The questionnaire was collected on next visit.
- Questionnaire had 21 questions – 2 for physiotherapy as field, 5 for physiotherapy academics, 9 for physiotherapy treatment and 5 for physiotherapy patient referral
3.0 Results and discussion

Qualitative data analysis was used to assist in interpreting data. Data obtained from the study is as follows. Table-1 presents average awareness of physiotherapy amongst doctors of rural setting.

Table-2 gives information about response received from practitioners on various questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Total in Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Knowledge of Physiotherapy</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>76.66 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiotherapy Education</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiotherapy Treatment</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>55 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral of Patients</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from Table-1 shows the awareness of physiotherapy amongst the doctors in total is only about 34% of 100%. Table-2 data suggests that only 76% of doctors have general knowledge about physiotherapy, 65% of doctors have knowledge of physiotherapy academics, 55% of doctors have knowledge of physiotherapy treatment and 34% of doctors refer their patients to or refers their patient for physiotherapy treatment. Area wise distribution of awareness (in percentage) is given in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of Doctors</th>
<th>% of Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kadgaon</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vilad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadgaon Gupta</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pimpri</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dehare</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadala</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study shows general knowledge related to physiotherapy is 76.66%. The Doctors are not aware of the basic knowledge related to physiotherapy that it’s a paramedical education having course of 4 years +6 months of internship. Patients are always referred by medical professionals to physiotherapist. Therefore it is important for medical professionals to have proper knowledge of physiotherapy. This study also showed that the awareness of academics and treatment related physiotherapy is 65% and 55% respectively. Most of the doctors are aware of physiotherapy services but didn’t know about all the modalities used in treating the patients other than hot/cold packs and traction. Physiotherapy not only treats the patients with musculoskeletal conditions but Neurological, Cardiac, Pulmonary, Pediatrics condition also. The reference and taking feedback from patient after receiving physiotherapy is 34% i.e. the physician doesn’t refer their patients to physiotherapy department, nor do they take any feedback from them. To ensure further utilization of the physiotherapy services, measures need to be taken to create awareness of physiotherapy role through public education and direct discussion.
The provision of continuous medical education is necessary for better communication between doctors and physiotherapists (17).

4.0 Conclusion
As per results obtained from the study, we concluded that all the doctors of rural areas are not aware of physiotherapy services and importance of exercises protocols and modalities, and how the treatment is beneficial for the rehabilitation of the patient as whole. The result suggest that physician are most familiar with technical aspects of physical therapy, and those with more knowledge of professional procedures used by physical therapists are least comfortable sharing the responsibility for decision making when referring their patients to physical therapists. In keeping with low professional knowledge, all specialists in this study selected procedures traditionally associated with the physical therapy profession (heat, exercises and traction) is contrast to professional procedure (PNF, Neurodevelopment Approach, isokinetic approach , isokinetic evaluation and protocol, and mobilization). Outcome of the present study also emphasizes the need of educating the physicians on importance and usefulness of physiotherapy medical practice.

Reference

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