

AWARENESS OF PHYSIOTHERAPY & ITS SCOPE AMONG WOMEN IN A COMMUNITY- A SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

Background: Physiotherapy is an emerging field in healthcare with innumerable benefits. Talking about its role in women's life & health, it is again countless. But it has been seen in most of the scenario that women even in the metropolis are not much aware as to when to seek help from a physiotherapist. So the aim of this study was to find out the awareness and knowledge about physiotherapy in women residing in a community.

Methodology: A community based survey was carried out purely based on the questionnaire method which consist of sets of questions. Prior to the data collection the researcher explained about the study to the subject and an informed consent was obtained from them. The researcher gave the questionnaire form to the subject and was required to fill the frame.

Results: Only 79% of respondents had awareness about physiotherapy but the awareness about scopes & scenarios in which women can actually benefit from physiotherapy was less.

Conclusion: The result of the study indicates that women in city are still not completely aware of scopes of physiotherapy service. They just know it is a kind of health care service. Appropriate measures have to be taken to increase the awareness and create a good attitude towards the Physiotherapy profession.

KEY WORDS: Women's Health, Physiotherapy, Physiotherapy Awareness.

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INTRODUCTION

Physiotherapy or Physical therapy as defined by WCPT (World Confederation of Physical Therapy) is a health care profession which deals with human function & movement and helps patient in maximising physical potential. It helps patient in improvising his quality of life by use of physical approaches in promotion, prevention, treatment/intervention and rehabilitation. It is science based, committed to extending, applying, evaluating and reviewing the evidencethat underpins and informs its practice and delivery. Taking into consideration clinical judgement and

informed interpretation as its core [1]. Physiotherapy is the one of the oldest profession in healthcare practiced since 460Bc by great physicians such as Hippocrates and Galen. Events such as First World War, Polio- outbreak, increasing disabilities lead to rapid progression and modernization of physiotherapy from 18th century [2].

In India Physiotherapy treatment became evident in the year 1952, due to outbreak of Poliomyelitis in Mumbai. In 1953, first Physiotherapy school and Centre was established in Seth G.S Medical College and K.E.M Hospital as

joint collaborative venture by Government of India and Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) with support from WHO [3].

There has been a tremendous improvement in physiotherapy treatment with more of evidence based quality health services. Physical therapists as a part of the health care team play an essential role in reducing hospital stay, in providing a quicker recovery, and in rehabilitation for a better quality life [4].

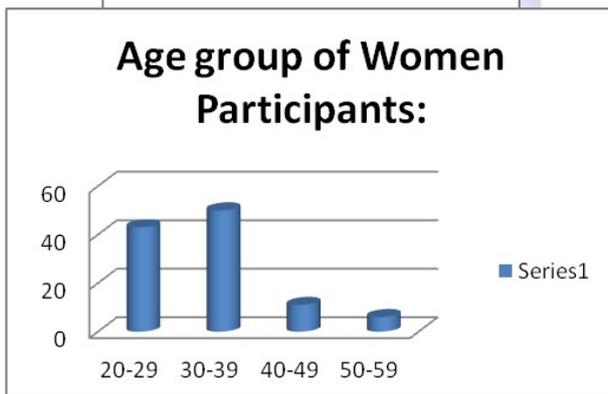
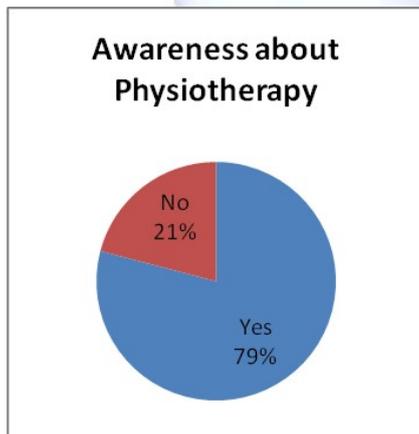
Women dwelling in an apartment or community usually ignore their health. In case they think of health they prefer physicians. They usually have nominal idea about wonders of physiotherapy.

With this survey I wanted to get an insight into how much Indian women know about physiotherapy and its benefits.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A survey was conducted online using social media in the form of questionnaire which had open ended and closed ended questions. The questionnaire was submitted using Google forms to all using a link shared via social media, (Whatsapp, Facebook, Gmail) for a period of one week. Responses were obtained and analyzed.

RESULTS



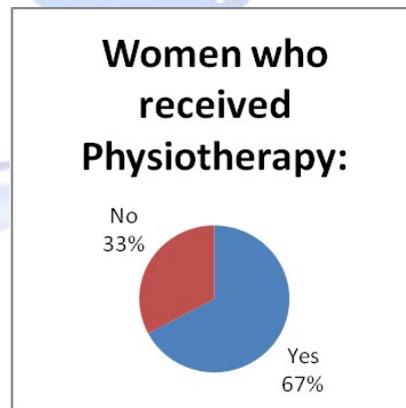
Results were calculated directly by Google spreadsheet in terms of frequency distribution and descriptive statistics. The study was conducted on a sample of 110 women in a community setting in Bangalore.

Response rate: The questionnaire was distributed to 110 respondents. All the 110 respondents completed the questionnaire and returned to the researcher on the same day (Response rate: 100 %)

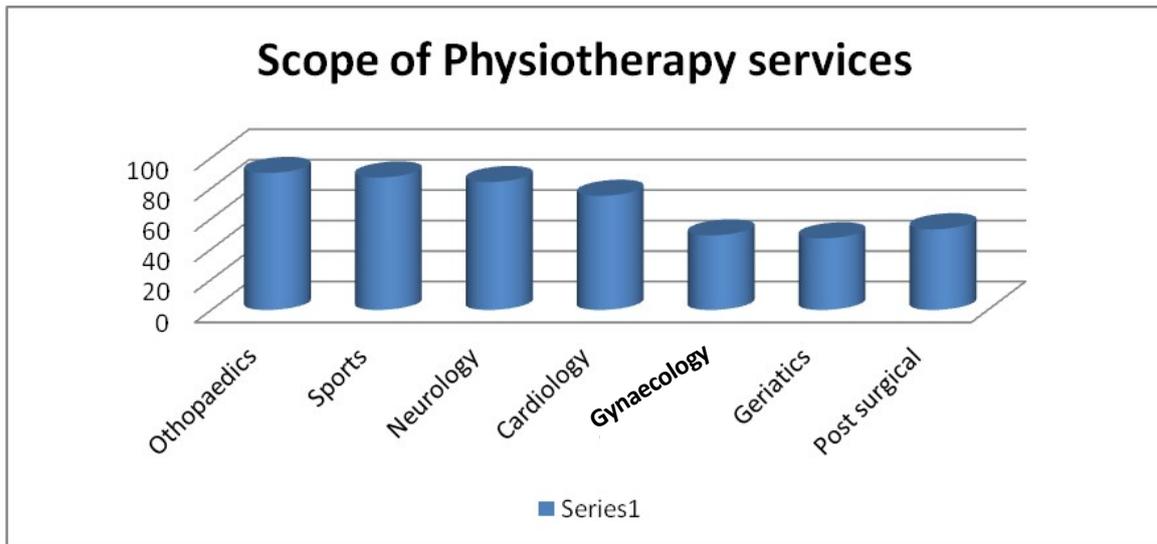
Awareness about Physiotherapy: It was good to get in the results that 79% of women who participated in the survey had knowledge about physiotherapy. Physiotherapy is an emerging profession, more the people are aware more people can get benefitted by physiotherapy services.

Most of the respondents in my study belong to 30-39 years age group.

Women who received Physiotherapy: From the data collected, 67% of women received some form of physiotherapy treatment in their lives. But though most of them were not that clear about the type of treatment they received.

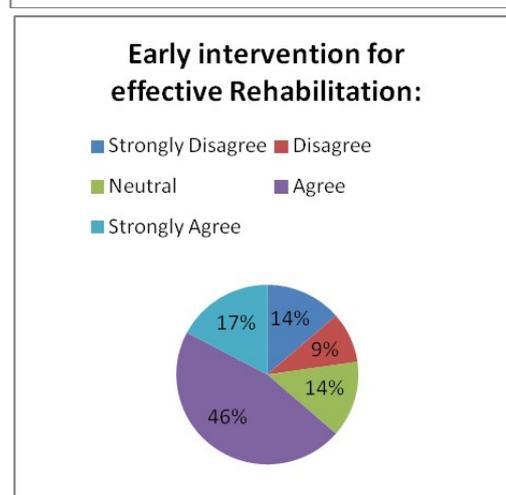
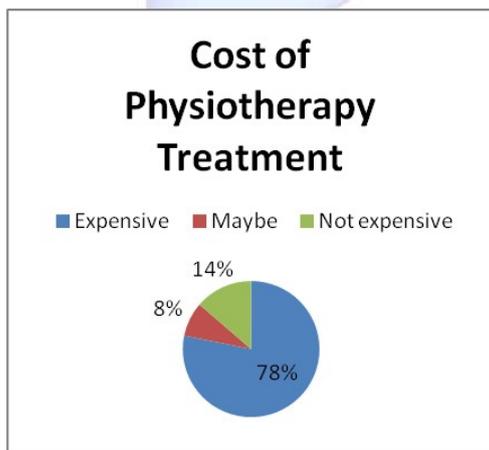


Physiotherapy as a Profession: 66% of respondents who had idea about Physiotherapy feel that as a profession Physiotherapy was excellent. With the increasing number of somatic pain, postural abnormalities & obesity it is a good career option.



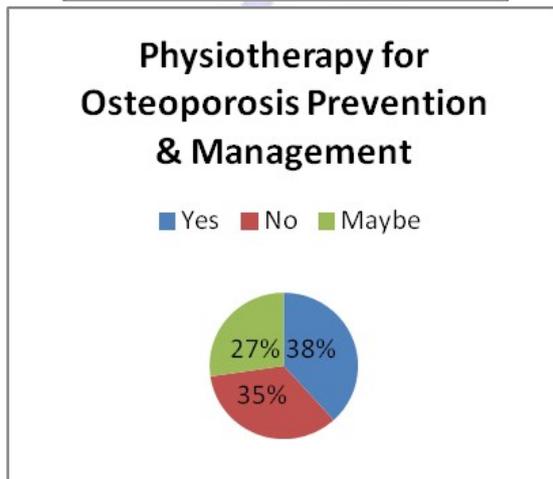
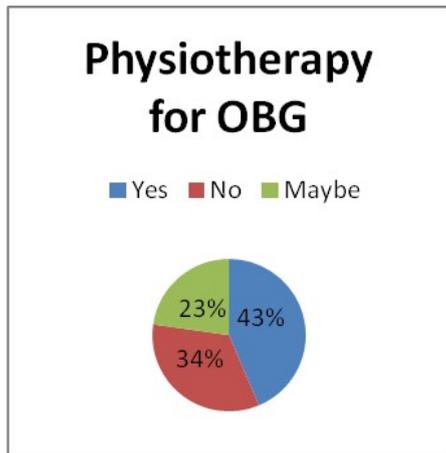
Scope of Physiotherapy: Most of the respondents had idea that Physiotherapists can treat Orthopaedic & Sports injury. On being asked regarding role of physiotherapy in Pregnancy, Labour, geriatrics they had minimal ideas.

Physiotherapy for pain management: 72% of respondent are aware & feel that physiotherapy is an excellent way for pain management. 27% feel physiotherapy doesnot deal with pain management.



Cost of Physiotherapy treatment: about 78% of the respondent feel that physiotherapy services are too expensive for middle class people to afford. While 14% had no idea whether they paid the right amount for the services they availed.

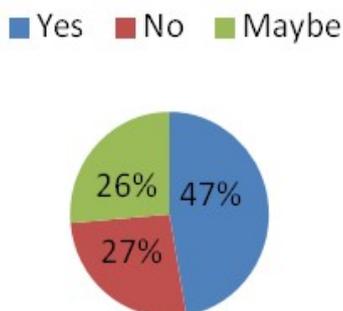
Early intervention for effective rehabilitation: 46% of respondents strongly agree that with early intervention of physiotherapy, rehabilitation process gets accelerated. Whereas 14% of respondents didn't agree with this concept.



Physiotherapy for OBG: 43% of women had some idea that physiotherapy can help women in their pregnancy. But few had minimal idea about role of physiotherapy in labour & during post natal period. 30% of respondents feel physiotherapy has no role in OBG.

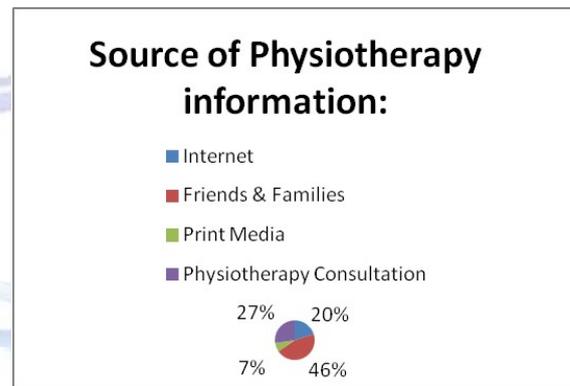
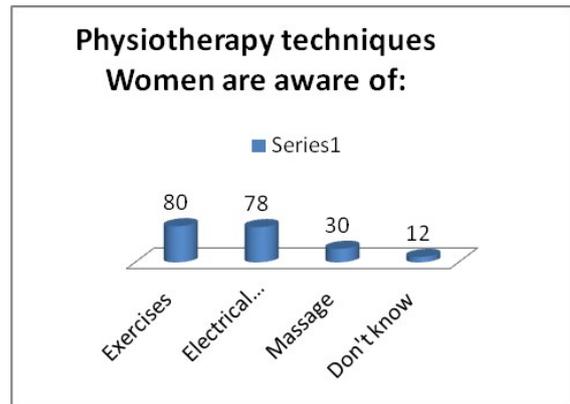
Physiotherapy for Osteoporosis Prevention & Management: 38% of respondents are aware of the impact of physiotherapy in prevention and management of osteoporosis. 275 were unsure of osteoporosis and role of physiotherapy in such case

Physiotherapy for Urinary Incontinence:



Physiotherapy for Urinary Incontinence: It was a good response that about 47% of women

respondents were aware of the fact that regular Kegel's exercises made tremendous impact on the pelvic floor muscles of women.



Source of Physiotherapy information: Around 46% of respondents found their first information about Physiotherapy from Friends & families who had one undergone physiotherapy treatment. Print media as a source of information for physiotherapy was negligible accounting to only 7%.

DISCUSSION

The survey helped to understand the existing level of awareness about physiotherapy and its scope / areas of intervention amongst women in a community setting. Though women were aware about physiotherapy in a vague manner but specific scopes and areas where physiotherapy can benefit women was still meagre. Women these days have also received some form of physiotherapy, though couldn't specify the type. They also expressed in the survey that, physiotherapy as a profession was excellent. They would definitely consider it for their kids in future. All these indicate a growing awareness about physiotherapy.

Most of the respondents did feel physiotherapy treatment being expensive so it was not feasible for them to avail it. In general they also

felt the major part of physiotherapy treatment was exercises and electrical modalities. They also feel that physiotherapy majorly deals with orthopedic, sports injuries & certain neurological conditions.

Most respondents also were aware that physiotherapy does help in pain management. According to a study conducted by Lorimer Moseley [5], combined physiotherapy treatment and patient education produced symptomatic and functional change in moderately disabled chronic low back pain patients.

While most of the respondents were not aware of the specific areas like antenatal, post natal role of physiotherapy, role of physiotherapy in prevention and management of osteoporosis, or role of physiotherapy in management of urinary incontinence. As per the study conducted by Margaret Sherburn [6] pelvic floor muscle training during pregnancy facilitates, rather than obstructs, labour. As per the study by Licia Santos Santana⁷ TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation) reduces pain and postpones the need for pharmacological need for analgesia during labour. According to a study by Neumann.P et al⁸ an effective program showed increased contractile strength as well as increased resting tone of pelvic floor, which improved support of pelvic organs higher in the pelvis.

CONCLUSION

There has been studies about awareness of physiotherapy in general population, in medical interns and higher secondary students. My purpose of this survey was to find out how well women know about physiotherapy and what to expect from physiotherapy services. The respondents had awareness about physiotherapy but awareness about the role of Physiotherapy in specialties other than orthopaedics and sports

is not satisfactory, There is a felt need to create more specific understanding and promote utilization of services to promote quality of life. Once they are aware, they can help make their lives better and prevent themselves from multiple age related degenerative conditions. This study can be studied in a large scale and the factors attributing to the awareness can be studied.

Conflicts of interest: None

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