

Awareness about Physiotherapy among Higher Secondary Students and Perseverance among Physiotherapy Students and Professionals in Meerut: A Survey

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ABSTRACT

Introduction & Purpose of the study: Physiotherapy is concerned with health promotion, prevention of disease or injury, treatment & rehabilitation. Physiotherapy has been in existence in India since five decades but it has been observed in the last five-six years that the number of students pursuing physiotherapy as a career is declining as is the number of physiotherapy students and professionals continuing the profession. Thus, the purpose of this study is to find out the level of awareness about physiotherapy among higher secondary students & perseverance among students & professionals towards physiotherapy. **Materials & Method:** This was a questionnaire based survey. Subjects included in the study were higher secondary students, B.P.T. final year students, interns, M.P.T. students & physiotherapy professionals. Data was collected by making personal visits to various colleges, hospitals & clinics in Meerut and the questionnaire was distributed to 109 subjects (46 higher secondary students, 51 B.P.T. 4th year students & interns and 12 M.P.T. students & physiotherapy professionals). **Results:** Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. 41% of higher secondary students had an idea about physiotherapy, 26% of higher secondary students wanted to pursue physiotherapy as a career, and 10% of BPT 4th yr Students and interns did not want to continue with their profession. On the other hand 100% of MPT students and physiotherapy professionals wanted to continue with their profession. **Conclusion:** Awareness of physiotherapy is still lacking among higher secondary students and perseverance towards the profession among students and interns is declining.

Key words: Awareness, perseverance, physiotherapy, professionals

INTRODUCTION

Physiotherapy is a science-based health care profession in which principles from biological, physi-

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cal and behavioural sciences are integrated and applied. It is concerned with health promotion, prevention of disease or injury, treatment & rehabilitation. Hippocrates advocated massage and Hector used hydrotherapy (water therapy) in 460 B.C. The earliest documented origins of actual physical therapy as a professional group date back to 1894 when nurses in England formed the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Other countries soon followed and started formal training programs, such as the School

of Physiotherapy at the University of Otago in New Zealand in 1913. In the United States, Physical Therapy began in 1914 in Portland, Oregon, with Reed College and Walter Reed Hospital graduating the first physical therapists, then called "reconstruction aides." These were nurses with a background in physical education needed to help manage the devastating effects of the First World War [1,2].

Research has been a part of profession since the its early beginnings; the first physical therapy research was published in the United States in March 1921 in the first edition of The PT Review. This was the year when Mary McMillan, PT, first organized the Physical Therapy Association, which eventually changed its name to the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). This was a landmark year, as educational standards for university professional PT programs were instituted and programs became accredited by a national body. Scientific research and technology started to shape the profession [1,2].

Physical therapists joined the team for medical research with the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) cooperating with the Salk vaccine trials, which led to having a vaccine for Polio in 1956 that is now considered commonplace [1]

In India, physiotherapy has been in existence since five-six decades, but it has been observed in the last five-six years that number of students pursuing physiotherapy as a career is declining as is the number of physiotherapy students and professionals continuing the profession. Physiotherapy is such an integral part of health care without which complete recovery of an individual with any disorder is not possible. But, inspite the profession is on a decline in India. Thus, the aim of this study was to find out of this, the level of awareness of physiotherapy among higher secondary students & perseverance among students and professionals towards physiotherapy in Meerut.

MATERIALS & METHOD

This was is a questionnaire based survey. Two questionnaires were drafted - Questionnaire 1: Regarding awareness among higher secondary students; Questionnaire 2: Regarding perseverance among physiotherapy student and professionals. Subjects included in the study were higher secondary students, B.P.T. final year students, interns, M.P.T. students & physiotherapy professionals in Meerut.

Questionnaire 1 was distributed to higher secondary students [Group 1] and Questionnaire 2 was distributed to two groups - Group 2(a), consisting of B.P.T. final year students and interns, and Group 2(b), consisting of M.P.T. students & physiotherapy professionals.

Data was collected by making personal visits to various schools, colleges, hospitals & clinics in Meerut. Schools visited were Dayawati Modi Academy-I, City Vocational Public School and Sanatan Dharm Inter College. Colleges visited were Subharti College of Physiotherapy, IIMT College of Physiotherapy and College of Applied Education and Health Sciences. Hospitals & clinics visited were KMC Hospital Research Centre, Lokpriya Hospital, and Koshish Physiotherapy Centre, Meerut.

Questionnaires were distributed to 109 subjects (46 higher secondary students, 51 B.P.T., 4th yr. & interns and 12 M.P.T. students & physiotherapy professionals) and data was analysed by using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

The subjects were into three groups: Group 1, Group 2a and Group 2b.

Group 1- Awareness among higher secondary

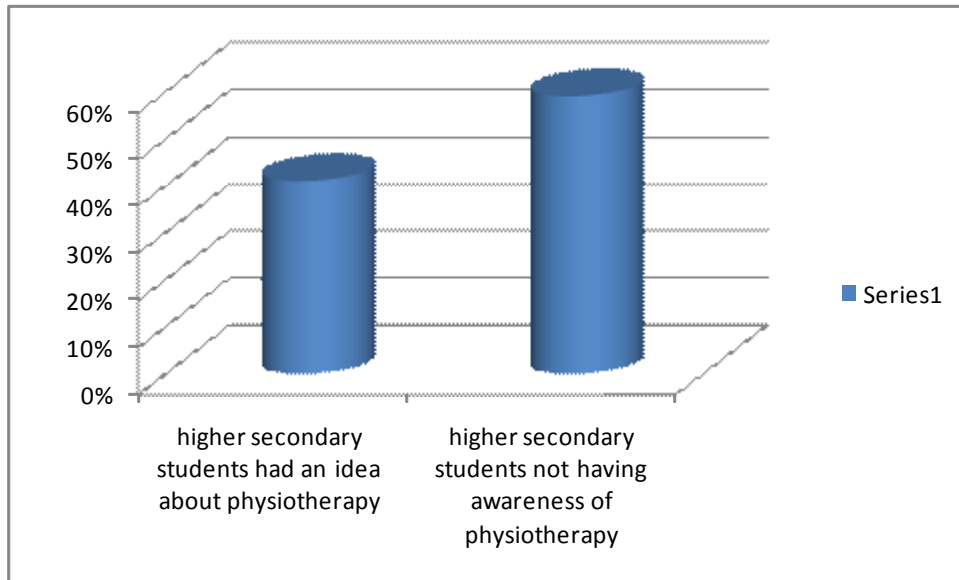


Fig. 1

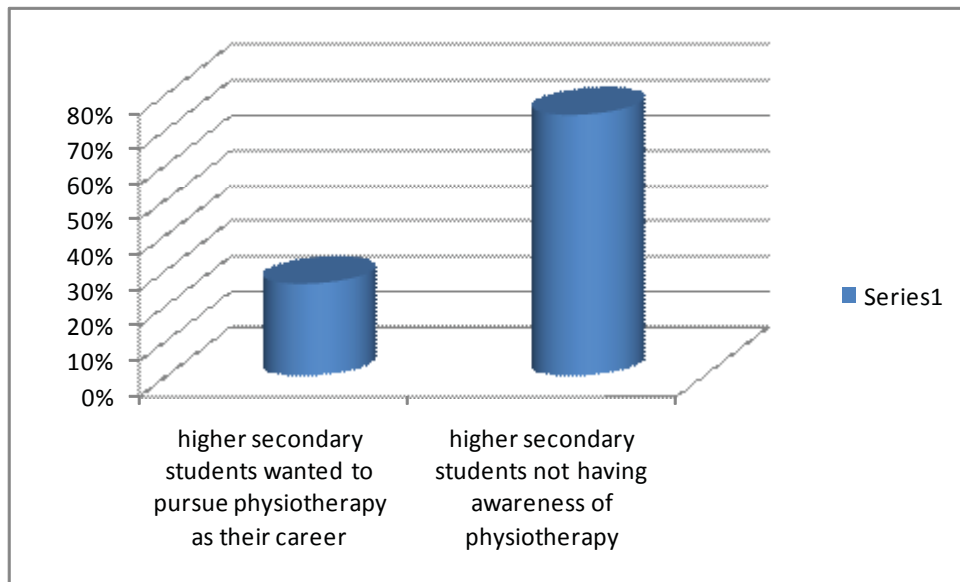


Fig. 2

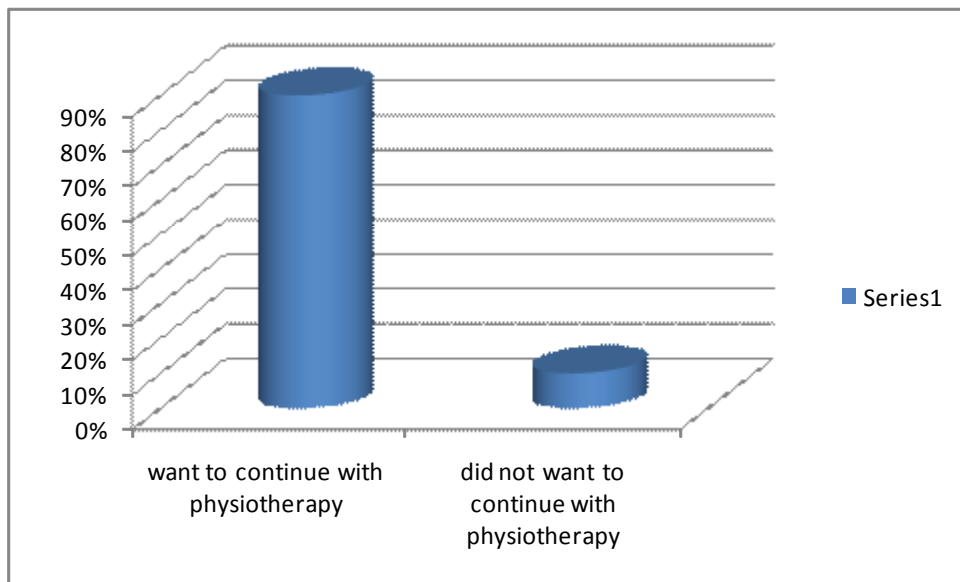


Fig. 3

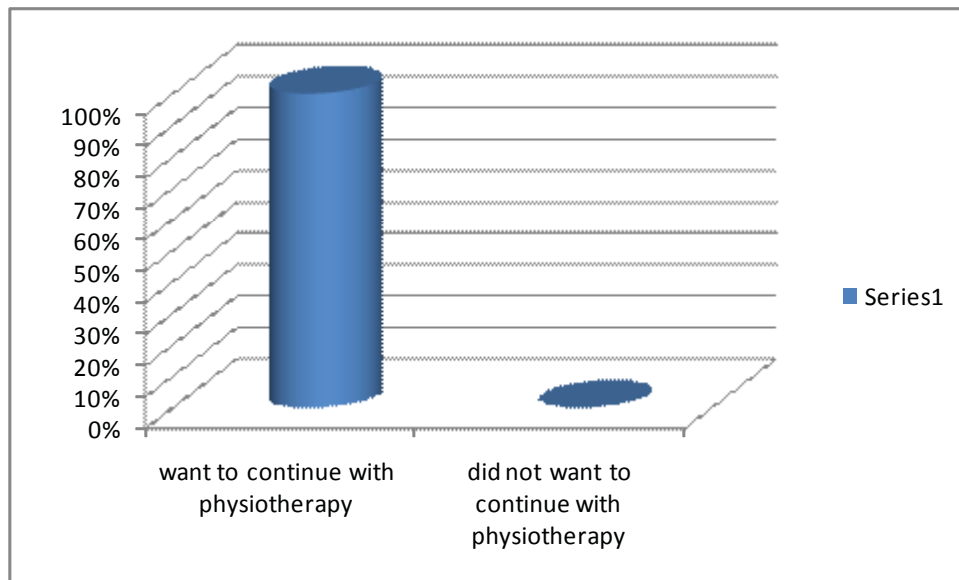


Fig. 4

students.

41% of higher secondary students had an idea about physiotherapy (Fig.1) and only 26% of higher secondary students wanted to pursue physiotherapy as their career (Fig.2).

Group 2 (a)- Perseverance among B.P.T. final year students and interns.

10% of BPT final year students and interns did not want to continue with their profession (fig.3).

Group 2(b)- Perseverance among M.P.T. students and professionals.

All M.P.T. students & physiotherapy professionals wanted to continue with the profession (fig.4).

DISCUSSION

For the sake of understanding, we will discuss results in following categories:

Group 1- Awareness among higher secondary students.

It was found that only 41% of higher secondary students had an idea about physiotherapy, but their ideas were vague in that it is a field that deals with bones, it is an aid given to person suffering from ar-

thritis or it is a treatment by massage, exercises, heat and shocks that improve mobility. In our study, we found that only 26% of higher secondary students wanted to pursue physiotherapy as their career while most of them wanted to pursue only if they didn't get through pre-Medical Tests.

Group 2 (a)- Perseverance among B.P.T. final year students and interns.

10% of B.P.T. final year students and interns did not want to continue with their profession. The reasons for not continuing the profession were lack of jobs and low pay scales, government jobs open to diploma holders only or lack of discrimination between diploma and degree holders, no physiotherapy council, not much support from medical personels, lack of team approach in hospital setups and lack of recognition among general population.

Group 2(b)- Perseverance among M.P.T. students and professionals.

All M.P.T. students & physiotherapy professionals wanted to continue with the profession and most of them were continuing just because they had already spent many years in this profession.

CONCLUSION

Awareness of physiotherapy is still lacking among higher secondary students and perseverance among physiotherapy students and professionals is declining.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Small sample size, thus results cannot be generalized.

Individuals included were students and professionals from Meerut only.

IMPLICATIONS

- 1.) There is a need to have mass awareness programs about physiotherapy.
- 2.) There should be better job avenues in private as

well as government sectors.

- 3.) There is a great need to have physiotherapy council.
- 4.) Steps need to be taken to gain recognition in society.
- 5.) Team approach needs to be emphasized among medical and paramedical personnels in hospital setups for full recovery of an individual with any disorder.

REFERENCES

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