

Physiotherapy and Education: Attitudes to Develop Learning or Learning to Develop Attitudes?

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Abstract

Professionals' attitudes determine their knowledge and behavior towards teaching and learning in education. Physiotherapists (PTs) are an essential part of a multidisciplinary rehabilitation team to provide holistic care for people with a variety of medical conditions targeting along a symptom control-quality of life continuum. This short report summarized the findings from research studies on attitudes of PTs towards education from an evidence-informed perspective through a preliminary search of PubMed database.

Keywords: Physiotherapists; PubMed databae; Continuum; Rehabilitation.

Introduction

Professionals' attitudes determine their knowledge and behavior towards teaching and learning in education. Physiotherapists (PTs) are an essential part of a multidisciplinary rehabilitation team to provide holistic care for people with a variety of medical conditions targeting along a symptom control- quality of life continuum [1].

This short report aimed to summarize the findings from research studies on attitudes of PTs towards education from an evidence-informed perspective through a preliminary search of PubMed database.

Main Findings

PT Students Versus Others

Wellock² compared opinions, attitudes, and interests of physical therapy students with other

students from 18 freshmen groups at the University of Michigan and found that PT students ranked highest on the Biological Science Interest, Social Adjustment, and Emotional Adjustment scales, and lowest on the Infrequent Response, Social Undesirability, and Creative Personality scales.

Rose et al [3] assessed the attitudes of 474 students in medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, and physical therapy toward interprofessional education using the Interdisciplinary Education Perception Scale and Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale. The study found differences among professions with students in medicine and physical therapy rated members of their own professions significantly higher in the areas of competence/ autonomy and need for cooperation as compared with those in nursing and occupational therapy.

PT Students- Bachelors Versus Masters

Warren and Pierson [4] compared the characteristics and attitudes of a total 766 students from 22 entry-level bachelor's and master's degree PT students, and found that Master's degree respondents anticipated greater involvement in research and teaching and felt better prepared to practice across a broad spectrum of clinical practice and to perform activities related to research, teaching, management, and direct access practice. The study findings not only suggested differences to exist between entry-level bachelor's and master's degree students in physical therapy but also implicate

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curriculum planning, recruitment and scholarship efforts, and policy formation in physical therapy education.

Peer Mentorship

Quesnel et al [5] surveyed 260 Canadian Master of Physical Therapy (MPT) students' knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding peer mentorship using an online questionnaire. "Most respondents (68.7%) reported that they did not experience peer mentorship during their MPT programme. A few respondents (5.4%) reported having received formal training on peer mentorship as part of their PT curriculum. Respondents generally held positive attitudes toward peer mentorship: 65.9% agreed that including peer mentorship is important, 89.5% agreed that peer mentorship can assist with learning in clinical internships, and 84.1% agreed that peer mentorship can help the transition from student to professional."

Transition in Levels of Qualification

Mistry et al [6] surveyed 1,397 Canadian physical therapists for their attitudes toward the transition from bachelor's to master's degrees and the implementation of clinical doctorate degrees in physical therapy and found that "45% favored the transition from bachelor's to master's degrees, and 21% did not; 27% favored a transition from a master's to a doctoral degree, while 53% did not. Finally, 56% favored the implementation of a post-professional clinical doctorate (PPCD) in PT, and 23% did not.

Country Wise Comparison

Gotlib et al [7] surveyed 667 first-year physiotherapy students from 21 university-level schools in the Czech Republic, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Spain and the U.K and reported following findings; "79% said that a personal interest was the main reason why they had decided to study physiotherapy and most students from the Czech Republic, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Spain and the U.K. claimed that it is easy to find a job in other EU countries than those of themselves."

Discussion

Our short report found only limited number of studies on this context and this insufficient evidence together with limited focus on such an important

academic issue is an urgent need from a professional development perspective in India. One such example is problem-based learning and PT attitudes [8]. Inadequate knowledge and poor attitude could exclude the application of the principles of logic and scientific methods to the implementation of physiotherapy curricula, and could result in fragmented knowledge, with a potentially negative impact on teaching and learning.

The studies and their findings warrant comprehensive policy-based interventions targeting interprofessional education and curricular revision in order to eradicate the knowledge deficits and negative attitudes which may lead to inappropriate teaching-learning behavior among PTs.

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