

# Awareness of Physiotherapy among Higher Secondary Students- A Survey

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## Abstract

**Background:** Physiotherapy is a kind of art among various health care professional. It is the rapidly emerging allied health profession in India. It is engaged with promoting health and maximizing potential. Students are the budding generation where the knowledge regarding physiotherapy as a treatment must be developed. This study focused on students in Thanjavur District since the term physiotherapy as health care service is rising gradually nowadays. The main objective of this study is to scrutinize the level of awareness of physiotherapy among the students who are the vitals of the upcoming generation.

**Objective:** The purpose of the study is to assess the level of awareness of Physiotherapy among Higher Secondary students in Kumbakonam of Thanjavur District. subjects and methods: A structured survey questionnaire depicting the awareness with three components namely Knowledge Attitude and Belief towards physiotherapy is distributed around 200 students of ARR Matriculation Higher Secondary School in Kumbakonam. The responses were collected from the students for the statistical data analysis. result and conclusion: The awareness regarding all the three aspects were significantly less. It is said that there will be in chance of creating the awareness among students unless the professionals themselves include in the repletion and improvement of the field.

**Keywords:** Physiotherapy, Awareness, Higher secondary, survey questionnaire

## Introduction

According to World Confederation of Physical Therapy (WCPT) it is a profession mainly aims at providing health care to people in order to regain and retain the functional ability throughout the life span.<sup>1</sup>The ultimate goal of every physiotherapist is to retain one's functional ability by all means. The physiotherapist mainly concentrates in rehabilitating a patient and making his independent as possible the condition permits. He is not only a therapist but also a companion

to the patient and his family in making them understand the current scenario of the patient and a brief counselling is given to their care taker.

Physiotherapy was initially started by the World's great physicians namely the Hippocrates and Galen. It played an important role during the First World War and at the time of Polio outbreak. The above mentioned events were responsible for the development and enhancement of Physiotherapy during century back.<sup>2</sup> In India Physical Therapy emerged in the year 1952 due to Poliomyelitis. Under the support from World Health Organization, the Indian Government and the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) undertaken the responsibility in opening the first physiotherapy institution in Seth G.S. Medical College and K.E.M. Hospital in the year 1953.<sup>3</sup>

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Physical Therapy have a wide range of scope. It plays a vital role in every stream namely orthopedics, Neurology, Cardio Respiratory, Sports, Gynecology,

Pediatrics etc. Recent years back the term physical therapy usually meant to deal with pain and assumed that only massage is given by a therapist. According to the study done by Anila Paul in the year 2015 the awareness of physiotherapy in general population is less.

Usually patients are referred to physiotherapist by a physician. The therapist must gain confidence from the patient so that the treatment goal will be achieved easily, quickly and effectively<sup>4 5</sup>. Physiotherapist can work in a hospital or set up a clinic by his own and also have a home visit.

Physical therapy is a highly emerging profession nowadays. The need of physiotherapy in each hospital and health center must be increased. Earlier in medical field the people were more aware about Doctors and also Nurses. Even students of science stream were asked to become a Doctors. This concept is to be changed and people in various cities of our country must be more familiar to the term physiotherapy.

It is always said that when we try to impart knowledge regarding anything, it must be given at very early stage. Students are the budding generation where we can take an issue to the next level. Unfortunately students of this generation are lacking in deciding their future career. It is certain that every student must start planning about their future at the time of adolescence. Especially students of rural area in Tamil Nadu are not aware of any recent updates in medical field even if they belong to science stream.

Many studies have been done on medical and non-medical profession, anganwadi workers, and college students regarding the awareness and perspective of physiotherapy in the community. Even studies on school students have been done in Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia even in North India.

We physiotherapy keenly concentrate in inventing new techniques and exercise protocol for various disability. Recognition of a field in the community not only depends upon the advance treatment available in it, it actually deals with how the technique reach nook and corner of the country. This basic concept is an important factor in physiotherapy as an emerging profession mainly in Tamil Nadu.

As per the knowledge there is no study done in Tamil Nadu on higher secondary students regarding the awareness of physiotherapy. Hence objective of my study is to scrutinize the knowledge of physical therapy among school students in a particular school in Tamil Nadu.

## **Methodology**

The study design is a non experimental study-observational type. This survey was mainly conducted among 200 higher secondary students of ARR Matriculation Higher Secondary Students of Kumbakonam. The awareness of physiotherapy was determined using a self-structured survey. The students were selected based on their inclusion and exclusion criteria. Students who fall into the following categories were selected namely age 16 to 18, both Boys and Girls, all groups students and only English medium student were selected. Students who belong to Tamil medium and not willing to participate were excluded from the study.

## **Procedure**

Students of ARR Matriculation Higher Secondary School in Kumbakonam were selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The students belonging to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> standard were taken. The study was completely explained to the management and permission was obtained to take information from the students. At first approached the class teacher regarding the study and then each groups in the school were approached and explained the study and a questionnaire were given. After the completion the questionnaire it clearly stated that the data obtained will be used only for the study purposes.

A survey questionnaire depicting the awareness of physiotherapy in three components namely knowledge attitude and belief were constructed and initially distributed to the professionals for any correction. A pilot study using this questionnaire was done with a sample size of 10 for any difficulty in understanding. The pilot study showed a reliability of 0.7. After the pilot study satisfaction the questionnaire were distributed to the school students.

The questionnaire consists of four sections namely, section A includes demographic information (like name,

age, gender, group), section B includes questions that deals with the knowledge regarding physiotherapy, section C includes questions that deals with belief towards physiotherapy and section D includes questions that deals with attitude of physiotherapy. The section B, C and D each questions have two option, YES (OR) NO.

The students were given enough time to complete the questionnaire and the data were collected for the statistics.

Statistical Package for the Social Science version 23 were used for the data analysis.

### Data Analysis

**Table 1 : Knowledge Regarding Physiotherapy**

QUESTIONNAIRE	YES	NO
Are you aware of physiotherapist	124	25
have you gained knowledge about physiotherapy from friends/Relatives/Doctors	116	84
Have you gained knowledge about physiotherapy from mass media	75	125
is there a physiotherapy clinic in your locality	85	115
Have you ever visited physiotherapy clinic	53	147
Have you ever had a conversation with a physiotherapist	48	152
Have you seen any physiotherapy modality	78	122
Do physiotherapy work in hospital	80	120
Do they prescribe medicine and injection	53	147
Do they take X-ray and blood test	82	118
Do they monitor blood pressure and administer saline bottle	50	150
Do they have a role at the time of surgery and ICU setup	41	159
Do you think physiotherapy have a role before and after the surgery	94	106
Do physiotherapy have a role in First Aid	104	96

The table above shows the response of knowledge based questions regarding physiotherapy.

**TABLE 2 BELIEF TOWARDS PHYSIOTHERAPY**

QUESTIONNAIRE	YES	NO
Do you think physiotherapy can cure condition that is not possible by medicine	64	136
Is it necessary for a physiotherapist in a village	66	134
Do you believe in physiotherapy treatment	149	51
Is that physiotherapy only deals with pain	81	119

The table above depicts the responses obtained for the questions that deals with belief towards physiotherapy.

**Table 3: Phsiotherapy Attitude Based Questionnaire**

QUESTIONNAIRE	YES	NO
Do they have a role in pain management	126	74
Do physiotherapy have any age limit	52	148
Do they have a role in pregnancy and breast feeding	72	128
Can a cardiac patient advised for physiotherapy	103	97
Do they have a role in sports	137	63
Can a stroke patient advised for physiotherapy	108	92
Do they have a role in fracture management	135	65
Do they have a role in breathing difficulty	105	95
Can a physiotherapy regain an individual day to day activity	123	77

## Discussion

Among 200 samples. There was about 143 males that is 71.5% and female 28.5% (57). According to this study 62% of students were aware of the term physiotherapy that is the were familiar to the term but the concept of this field was not clear. The knowledge gained about physiotherapy was mainly from their friends, relatives. This study showed that the lack of knowledge was due to misunderstanding the role of physiotherapy with other health professional. Since there are limited number of clinic in the particular locality the students were not able to recognize the role of physiotherapy in the society. In spite of the misunderstanding students were able to find that certain task like prescribing medicine, injection, x-ray was not the work of this profession. One of the previous study in conducted in Ishikawa High School Students states that the term physiotherapy was known to many students by mass media. But in this study the student's attention towards physiotherapy by means of mass media was very low.

Regarding the role in surgery and ICU was not known by the students as they do not have any idea. As they consider intensive care unit is mainly for the critically ill patient is only under the guidance of Doctors. It seems that students have a confusion on physiotherapy

participation in first aid. The indulgent of physiotherapy was not able to distinguish by the students so there was a negative feeling on their treatments. Even they don't know whether modalities are used in the clinic. This population finds that there is no necessary for a physiotherapy set up in a village, but they believe in it. The students strongly agree that physiotherapy only deals with pain management because as per their knowledge the physiotherapist is confused with masseurs.

According to the attitude pf physiotherapy, the students mostly know the value in sports .There are many electives available in this field but the idea about this is not reached to everyone. This is interesting that since one or two hospital in that particular area are present with very few physiotherapist and patient with fracture or stroke are recommended to the physiotherapist. So the students the value of this field in the fracture and stroke management. As nowadays there are lot of scope for physiotherapist in obstetrics and gynecology, even students considers that there is no role of physiotherapy in this field as they did not taught regarding the scope of physiotherapy in various fields.

As there are many new technology available in physiotherapy and new modalities only very few are aware of this. There is an advent of newer techniques

in physiotherapy, which is supposed to be reached nook and corner of small towns and cities. It is a great disappointment that physiotherapy itself has not reached the small town and cities.

It is stated that the source quality and quantity of information concerning the physiotherapy profession for higher secondary students are very less.

One of the previous study that was done on Kanagawa Prefecture, the high school students nearly 95.4% were aware of physiotherapy. Similar study carried out in Saga Prefecture the percentage of students aware of physiotherapy was about 54. However these studies were not considered as they included students taking part in physiotherapy related organizational skills so that the level of awareness was comparatively high. As physiotherapist our aim should not only deal in preventive and curative measure, there must be a broad community based rehabilitation. This can be achieved by creating awareness in schools of small towns by means of camps, seminars and workshop.

This study reveals that there must be a great initiative in developing the knowledge, belief and attitude towards physiotherapy in every school. This helps the students to understand the role of physiotherapy as a profession and also a career wise.

### Conclusion

This study was designed to determine the knowledge belief and attitude towards physiotherapy by higher secondary students of Kumbakonam in Thanjavur District. The awareness regarding all the three aspects

were significantly less. It is said that there will be in chance of creating the awareness among students unless the professionals themselves include in the repletion and improvement of the field.

**Ethical Clearance-** Taken from Institutional Ethical Committee-Srm Institute of Medical Sciences, Kattankulathur, Chennai.

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**Conflict of Interest -** NIL.

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