

Perception of the Parents of Physiotherapy Students about Physiotherapy Profession: A Descriptive Explorative Study

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Abstract

Background: Parental perception plays a vital role in the life of children including their academic, professional and personal lives. The study aims to identify the perception of the parents of physiotherapy Students about physiotherapy profession.

Method: A survey study with a Convenient sample of 200 will be carried out, The parents of all the students, that is 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and interns of physiotherapy institute in Navi Mumbai will be included in the study. Following permission from the institute management, self-made validated questionnaire developed in light of related literature will be circulated by Google form to the participants with instructions. Outcome will be analysed statistically using MS Excel.

Conclusion: Based on the findings from study, it can be concluded that the majority of the parents have a positive perception of the physiotherapy profession and also are aware about physiotherapy field. The findings also suggest the need to stimulate the professional body of physiotherapy in India along with Indian physiotherapists to increase their efforts at creating awareness about physiotherapy.

The findings also help in navigating the barriers faced by physiotherapy students in various domains.

Keywords: Parents perception; Physiotherapy profession; Career.

Introduction

Physiotherapy plays a major role in rehabilitating a patient. The role of a Physiotherapist is to deal with application of physiotherapy skills & knowledge

to the assessment, design, delivery & evaluation of physiotherapeutic treatments in the management of the various conditions of acute or chronic sickness, disability or handicap.⁴

Physiotherapy is a science which incorporates a firm understanding of anatomy, physiology, disease and dysfunction, to provide intervention strategies for a variety of conditions notably, but not restricted to disabilities, pain, movement dysfunction, and health and wellness.^{1,2}

Recently, there has been increased interest in the factors which influence the career choices of medical and allied health sciences professionals. Most studies have looked at the future aspirations and career intentions of medical students and postgraduates

Choosing a career is a complex process that can be influenced by many factors such as age, gender, race, socioeconomic factors, culture. Career choice must be preceded by an awareness of and knowledge of career.⁴

Lack of awareness and knowledge of physical therapy (PT) profession has been cited as a barrier to consideration of the profession as career option.^{4,6}

Students enrolled in a physiotherapy program from all backgrounds were primarily influenced by family members or volunteer experiences when choosing career.^{4,5}

This is also the case for the physiotherapy profession, which is chosen by students who are uninformed and unaware. In choosing a profession, students must build a balance between his/her family expectations and their own preferences. They must choose the field, in which they can do their best and satisfy their desires. For this reason, choosing the physiotherapy profession requires information, interest, desire, and talent. The choice of an occupation is an important decision, Their career choices depend on various factors such as funding, type of school attended, cultural factors, race, gender, job experience, personal factors, prestige, lifestyle preference, personality type, and commitment.⁴

It was also found that parental perceptions play a dynamic role in children's education with respect to academic performance, vocation choice and eventually influence behaviour of their children towards career choice. It was concluded from the literature search that parents had a strong influence over the career choice their children make, which

can be both intentionally and inadvertently. Their influence can either inspire children to explore a diverse set of potential occupations or to stick to path they think their parents will approve.⁷

Materials and Methods

Sample population included were parents of physiotherapy students and sampling method was convenience sampling. Parents of undergraduate physiotherapy were included in this study. Total sampling size was 133 parents. Materials included were google form, self-designed questionnaire. This study was descriptive explorative study in nature employing quantitative methods in collecting the data. A A cross sectional survey was carried out using a voluntary, anonymous, self-administered questionnaire among sampled students from all 4 years.

Approval from an institutional review committee was obtained.

Participants were informed about the survey and questionnaire was circulated through Google form.

Questionnaire were categorized in five domains which are

- 1) professional and career
- 2) financial
- 3) social
- 4) Emotional and mental
- 5) Academic

A Likert scale was used to rate the participant's accuracy of the perception of the profession, the data obtained was then analyzed using MS Excel

Results

For this study, a questionnaire was developed to assess perception of parents of physiotherapy student about physiotherapy profession, a questionnaire of 16 questions under 5 domains were given to all participants along with their consent to be willing to participate in this study, a Likert scale were used to rate the participants' accuracy in their perception of the profession.

A total of 137 responses collected via google form. the result was obtained and analyzed through MS-Excel in the form of pie chart and bar graphs. The response of pie charts and bar graphs were as follows:

In professional and career domain

1. Which year of physiotherapy is your child in?

Majority of responses were from the parents of 4th year (31.9%) and 1st year (30.4%) students following intern (23.7%), 3rd year(12.6%) and 2nd year (1.4%).

2. How did you get to know about physiotherapy profession?

On getting to know about physiotherapy profession 42.6% responded to "other source" while 24.3% responded to "a close friend or relative in the same profession" and 24.3% responded to "have taken treatment from physiotherapist" and only 8.8% responded to "a guidance or occupational counsellor"

3. Have you been involved during the career decision making of your pupil?

The involvement of parents during the career decision making of their pupil is quite good with 35.3% "extremely involved" and 33.8% "quite involved" while 27.9% responded with "somewhat involved" and only 3% responded with "no involvement"

3 Have you been involved during the Career decision making of your pupil?
136 responses

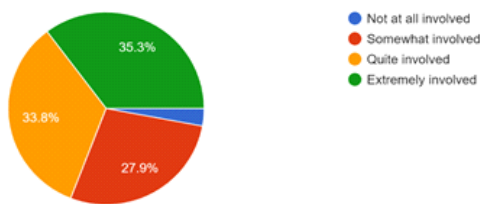


Fig. 1

4. To what extent have your ideas changed about physiotherapy profession since the start of your pupils physiotherapy profession ?

The extent of ideas of parents about physiotherapy profession since their pupils enrolment have changed with majority of parents responding "quite changed" 48.1% and "completely changed" 23.7% while 21.5% responded with "somewhat changed" and only 6.7% "not at all changed".

In social domain

5. Do you think there should be more awareness about physiotherapy in India?

An awareness about physiotherapy in India is important for the profession to grow , so does the majority of parents think with 76.5% responding "strongly agree" and 22.8% responding "agree" and only 0.7% "disagree".

5. Do you think there should be more awareness about physiotherapy in India?
136 responses

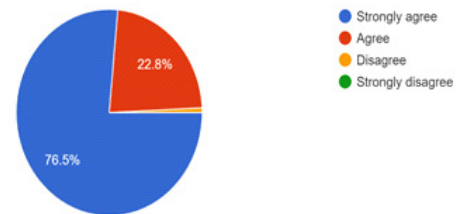


Fig. 2

6. Do you think physiotherapy is physically demanding profession?

Majority of parents agree that physiotherapy is physically demanding profession as responses 44.9% "strongly agree" and 55.9% "agree" while only 2.2% "disagree"

7. Do you think physiotherapy is a respectable job in India ?

Physiotherapy with its advancement in healthcare is one of the respectable job in India, Most of the parents responded with "strongly agree" 31.1% and "agree" 56.3% while 12.6% had "disagree".

Thus the result indicate a good social perception of parents of physiotherapy profession

Financial domain

8. Do you think physiotherapy profession pay well in India ?

Financial component is important aspect of a career and the growth of the profession Physiotherapy being a well paid job in India majority of the parents responded with "agree"47.1% while 43.4% had responded "disagree" following 5.3% "strongly agree" and 3.7% "strongly disagree".

9. Do you think physiotherapy career will provide economic stability to your child?

Many of the parents also thinks that physiotherapy career will provide economic stability to their child as most of them responded “agree” 77.2% and “strongly agree” 15.4% while only 7.4% responded “disagree”

10. How good do you think is the future job prospects of physiotherapy profession ?

According to the parents the job prospect of physiotherapy in India is “quite good” with 72.9% response and “extremely good” with 25.6% response while 1.5% think it is “somewhat good” and only 1% think “not at all good”.

10. How good do you think is the future job Prospects of physiotherapy profession?
 133 responses

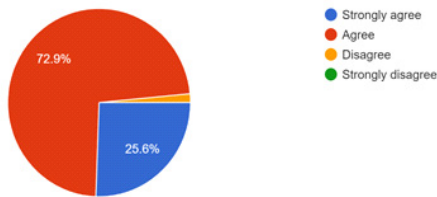


Fig. 3

Mental and emotional domain

11. Do you think the academic stress is affecting your child’s overall health?

Mental health and well being can affect ones career and academic growth so as the profession can affect ones mental and emotional health.

Upon asking about the academic stress affecting their child’s overall health majority of them “agree” with 54.4% response and 17.6% “strongly agree” while 25.7% ‘disagree’ and 2.3% “strongly disagree”

12. Do you think academic work takes most of your child’s time and hence restricts them from enjoying other activities that they enjoy?

Most of them also think that the academic work takes most of their child’s time and thus restrict them from enjoying other activities as 49.3% of

parents responded with “agree” 21.6% responded “completely agree” while 26.9% have disagreed and 2.2% have “completely disagreed”.

13. How often do you think your child worries about their future?(about the career)

On asking about how often your child worries about the future most of the parents responses were- “sometimes” 54.4% and “always” 37.5% while 4.5% responded “rarely” and 3.6% responded “never”.

13. How often do you think your child worries about their future ?(About the career)
 136 responses

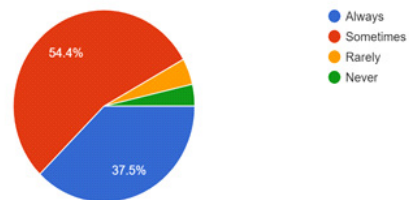


Fig. 4

Academic domain

14. Do you discuss your child’s academic needs with them regularly ?

Upon asking about discussing their child’s academic needs most of the parents responded with “sometimes” 58.1% and “all the time” 37.5% while only 4.4% said they don’t get time

15. How aware are you about your child’s academic and extracurricular achievements?

An awareness of child’s academic and extracurricular achievements among the parents of physiotherapy students is good as 47.1% responded “to a great extent” and “somewhat” 46.3% while 4.7% responded “very little” and 1.9% “not at all”.

16. Are you satisfied with your pupil’s career choice?

The parents of physiotherapy students are quite satisfied with the career choice of their pupils with 76.5% responses to “ totally satisfied” 22.8% responded to “somewhat” while only 0.7% responded to “very little”.

16. Are you satisfied with your pupil's career choice?
136 responses

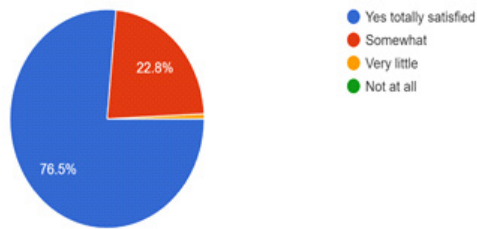


Fig. 5

Discussion

This study was done to assess the perception of the parents of physiotherapy students about physiotherapy profession.

The respondents were the parents of undergraduate students from YMT college of physiotherapy.

According to the results parents have a positive outlook of the profession and a better viewpoint of the profession, as they have become more aware about the profession.

Too little awareness and knowledge about the physiotherapy profession and the work physiotherapist do has been cited as a barrier, thus it reflects in the social domain as majority of parents finds the need of awareness.

To best of our knowledge, this is the first study conducted in india to assess parents perception about the profession.

Overall the parents are quite well versed with physiotherapy profession and all its aspects and are satisfied with the career choice of thier pupil.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from study, it can be concluded that the majority of the parents have a positive perception of the physiotherapy profession and also are aware about physiotherapy field. The findings also suggest the need to stimulate the professional body of physiotherapy in India along

with Indian physiotherapists to increase their efforts at creating awareness about physiotherapy.

The findings also helps in navigating the barriers faced by physiotherapy students in various domains.

Conflict of interest: There is conflict of interest among the authors.

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