

PHYSICAL THERAPY;

Level of awareness of medical professionals

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ABSTRACT... **The purpose of study:** Physical therapy is a renowned developing profession and improves not only the functional status but also enhance the quality of life in movement disorder population. The main purpose of this study was to find out the level of awareness about physical therapy in medical professionals. **Methodology:** A descriptive Cross sectional Survey was done with a sample of 100. A structured questionnaire was developed for data collection from hospitals of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The data was collected from July 2010 to December 2010. The response was analyzed through SPSS-17. **Results:** The results show that 90% of medical community knows about physical therapy as a specialty in medical sciences, refer their patients to the physical therapist, physical therapy is beneficial for their patients, and physical therapy has an essential role in health care system. The medical community refers their patients to the physical therapy for the management of musculoskeletal, neuromuscular, and cardiopulmonary conditions more commonly. **Conclusions:** Physical therapy is an emerging specialty of medical sciences in Pakistan. Physical Therapists are not only rehabilitating patients with movement dysfunction but are also working as active team members of medical community in Pakistan.

Key words: Physical Therapy, Medical Community, Health Care System

Article Citation

Khalid M, Malik AN, Khan A. Physical therapy; level of awareness of medical professionals. Professional Med J 2013; 20 (6): 948-950.

INTRODUCTION

Physical therapy is one of integral part of advance medicine, the development of modern medicine emphases on the quality of care and the importance of physical therapy as profession. It is one of fast emerging profession and plays a vital role in the betterment and quality of patient treatment. The physical therapists are the professionals working on movement dysfunctions, and participating as an active member of medical community in Pakistan. The physical therapists are not only dealing with the patients in outpatient departments, but also provide the rehabilitation services to the inpatients of secondary and tertiary care hospital.

The awareness of the general population of Pakistan regarding physical therapy is not yet properly developed, so their independent practice is not developed like any other medical specialty. Most of the patients are referred by other medical professionals to the physical therapist. Presently they are playing a big role in treating patients with musculoskeletal disorders, neuromuscular conditions. They treat movement dysfunctions and

play vital role in the prevention and management of diseases. They are concerned with habilitation and rehabilitation in the health care profession¹. They are fully capable to plan a treatment program for their patients. They are also capable to advise laboratory, electro diagnostic and imaging study and analyze the reports². There are different aspects of physical therapy profession, the dimensions of expert practice in physical therapy have implications for physical therapy practice, education, and continued research³. The awareness about the physical therapy is one of critical and crucial issue now days. The referral to physical therapy treatment is also challenging in Pakistan, it was also noticed that the necessary basic facilities are also lacking here⁴. The profession of physical therapy identifies and maximizes the quality of life and movement potential concerned with the promotion, prevention, treatment, habilitation and rehabilitation. Physical therapy is the interaction between physical therapist, patients/clients, other health professionals, families, care givers, and communities⁵. Over the last two decades, the profession of physical therapy has encountered extraordinary growth and popularity Physical therapy

(also known as physiotherapy) is a health profession concerned with the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of disease and disability through physical means. According to professional practice it is the profession to deal with unexpected, unforeseen, previously unknown uncertain and unique human situations. Physical therapy developed during World War I as a direct response to the need to rehabilitate large numbers of wounded soldiers⁶.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive cross sectional survey was conducted on the sample of 100. A structured questionnaire was developed and circulates to medical community of Rawalpindi and Islamabad for response. The data was collected from July 2010 to December 2010. The response was analyzed through SPSS-17.

RESULT

The 60% of the medical professional themselves visited the physical therapy department for movement dysfunction. The results showed that the mostly referral patient belongs to musculoskeletal 49%, neuromuscular 8% and cardiopulmonary 4%. The result of this study shows us that 90% of the professionals of the medical community in Pakistan accept physical therapy as a beneficial and effective part of health care system. The medical professionals have accepted physical therapy as separate specialty in the health care system.

DISCUSSION

Physical therapy needs to reflect 21st-century health priorities and be united with global and regional public health strategies. A proposed focus on health emphasizes clinical competencies, including assessments of health, lifestyle health behaviors, and lifestyle risk factors; and the prescription of interventions to promote health and well-being in every client or patient. The 21st-century physical therapist needs to be able to practice such competencies within the context of a culturally diverse society to effect

positive health behavior change⁷. Evidence shows expanded roles of physical therapist that require strategic thinking, a clear vision, effective planning, outcome measurements and continuous development of competencies. As a direct access health care professional physical therapist provides a comprehensive range of services across the continuum of care including the assessment treatment, health promotion and prevention, supportive care and referral⁸. In Nov 2005 the Canadian Physiotherapy Association published a Position statement Primary Health Care and Physiotherapy to increase awareness and advocacy efforts of the role of physical therapists as primary health care providers⁹. It is a fact that if the health professionals engage themselves in an active lifestyle then they would be able to become familiar with the issues involved in maintaining lifelong physical activity and to set a positive example for patients and the public. The importance of physical activity for health and the use of exercise training in managing selected disease states should be incorporated into the education of physicians and other medical professionals. It is important for the physician and physical therapist to understand the scope and boundaries of emerging roles and to develop practice standards and protocols that will maximize the benefit to the patient the practice and the health system¹⁰.

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that medical professional have awareness about the physical therapy profession, they not only themselves get treatment but also refer patient frequently to the physical therapy department. The majority of referral patients belong to the musculoskeletal, neuromuscular and cardiopulmonary. It is concluded that the physical therapy profession is one of effective health care profession and plays a vital role for the betterment and improvement of quality of life of patients. The physical therapy deals with the movement dysfunction and treat the movement related issue. The goal of physical

therapy is to restore full or partial function of the affected body part and to build up the muscle power for the compensation of weak muscles. Physical therapy is usually performed by a trained physical therapist. Physical Therapists are not only rehabilitating patients with movement dysfunction but are also working as active team members of medical community in Pakistan.

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Article received on: 01/02/2013
Accepted for Publication: 24/07/2013
Received after proof reading: 03/12/2013