

**A SURVEY OF WOMEN IN A COMMUNITY RELATING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF
PHYSIOTHERAPY AND ITS SCOPE**

Dr. Rima Musale, Professor, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth's Indutai Tilak College of
Physiotherapy, Pune

Dr. Manali Kulkarni, Associate Professor, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth's Indutai Tilak College
of Physiotherapy, Pune

Abstract

This study investigates the level of knowledge and awareness of physiotherapy among women in a particular community, with the goal of identifying any deficiencies in comprehension and possible opportunities for improvement. Physiotherapy is a fast growing area in healthcare that provides many advantages to patients, with a specific emphasis on human function and mobility. Women in urban regions often lack enough awareness about the optimal occasions to use the services of a physiotherapist. The research, done via a community-based survey using a questionnaire methodology, unveils that 79% of individuals exhibited cognizance about physiotherapy. The results emphasise the significance of resolving gaps in knowledge to improve general comprehension, particularly in the fields of pediatric and women's health physical therapy. The research emphasises the need for efficient communication methods to distribute information on physiotherapy, since 46% of participants obtained their first knowledge from friends and family, while print media had a little impact. Although 66% of participants acknowledged physiotherapy as a commendable occupation, there is a need to enhance the understanding of the specific kind of therapy provided, especially among those who have experienced physiotherapy treatment. The study indicates specific areas, such as pregnancy-related illnesses, osteoporosis prevention, urinary incontinence treatment, and the general range of services, where there is potential to increase knowledge. This will help cultivate a favourable perception of the profession and guarantee that its services are used promptly and with informed decision-making. It is essential to fill these gaps in knowledge in order to provide women the necessary information to make educated choices about their health and overall welfare.

Keywords: Physiotherapy, Healthcare Business, Community-Based Survey, Knowledge, Profession, Awareness

Introduction

The World Confederation of Physical Therapists (WCPT) defines physiotherapy as a healthcare profession that focuses on human function and movement. Physiotherapy is a subspecialty of physical therapy. Supporting patients in reaching their full physical potential is the objective of this programme (Alhowimel et al., 2018). For the purpose of improving the patient's quality of life, physical approaches are used in the following ways: promoting, preventing, treating/intervening, and rehabilitating. Furthermore, the approach is committed to extending, applying, reviewing, and reevaluating the evidence that supports and informs its methodology and execution. The approach is founded on scientific principles (Koranteng et al., 2023). This approach is predicated on the use of clinical judgement and informed interpretation at its core. Since 460 BC, notable medical practitioners such as Hippocrates and Galen have been practicing physiotherapy, which is a branch of the healthcare industry that has been around for a very long time. The fast development and modernization of physiotherapy began in the 18th century as a consequence of the occurrence of key events such as the First World War and the advent of polio, as well as the growth in the number of people who were affected by impairments (Dash, 2019).

One may trace the origins of physiotherapy treatment in India back to the year 1952, when it became required due to the outbreak of poliomyelitis in Mumbai. This event marked the beginning of the rehabilitation process. In 1953, the first Physiotherapy school and Centre was established at Seth G.S. Medical College and K.E.M Hospital. Both of these institutions are located in the United States (O'Donoghue et al., 2012). The World Health Organisation (WHO) provided support for this programme, which was a product of a joint collaborative effort between the Government of India and

the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). There have been considerable breakthroughs made in the area of physiotherapy, notably in the provision of healthcare treatments that are evidence-based and of high quality (Vikas, 2013). In addition to being essential members of the healthcare team, physical therapists play a significant part in reducing the length of time patients spend in the hospital, accelerating the healing process, and improving rehabilitation in order to achieve a qualitatively higher quality of life. It's very uncommon for women who live in apartments or communities to disregard their health (Barton et al., 2021). Whenever people are concerned about their health, they have a tendency to give preference to medical professionals. They often have a low level of comprehension about the miracles that physiotherapy has to offer. This research was conducted with the intention of gaining an awareness of the amount of information that Indian women have about physiotherapy and the benefits that it offers (Kumar et al., 2013).

Activities that are included in physiotherapy are those that are aimed at promoting health, enhancing quality of life, discovering individual capabilities, and offering treatments for rehabilitation and the reduction of pain and other health disorders. In addition to being highly helpful for the process of recovery, physical therapy is also a great method for reducing the amount of time spent in the hospital (Mathye & Narain, 2019). Workers in the healthcare industry are required to have a comprehensive grasp of physical therapy and the ways in which it influences medical treatment. According to the findings of recent research, all medical professionals have a satisfactory level of understanding on physiotherapy (Mbada et al., 2019). In spite of this, it is of the utmost importance for patients to seek the services of physiotherapists in accordance with the proper recommendations made by their respective medical specialists. Physical therapy is a kind of treatment that falls under the category of allied health and is regarded to be very useful for the maintenance of physical functions and movements (Kearns et al., 2014). Patients have been able to get high-quality treatment thanks to the emergence of a number of novel procedures and training techniques in recent years. For this reason, it is very necessary for both medical experts and the general people to have a comprehensive awareness of the topic in order to make the process of rehabilitation as smooth as possible and to speed up the healing process (Okasheh et al., 2019).

The most important advantages of physical therapy are the decrease or elimination of discomfort, the avoidance of surgical procedures, the enhancement of mobility, the acceleration of recuperation from stroke, the assistance in recovering from sports injuries, and the considerable assistance in enhancing balance (Ali et al., 2023).

The field of physiotherapy spans a wide variety of subfields, and it is essential for medical interns, residents, professionals, and academic authorities to have a full awareness of the relevance of this field (Glover et al., 2005). In light of the fact that physiotherapy comprises a number of subfields and specific areas within the sphere of medical treatment, rather than being restricted to massage therapy alone, it is imperative that patients' perceptions of the discipline be corrected. Despite the fact that musculoskeletal, neurological, and cardio-respiratory physiotherapy are well-known, there is a need to concentrate on and increase understanding of the specific disciplines of paediatric and women's health physical therapy (Khan, 2019).

Since their inception, physical exercises and services have evolved from being general to being specific forms of medical therapy all around the globe. Since this is the case, it is very necessary to acquire a substantial amount of knowledge about physical therapy (Heiwe et al., 2011). The results of the study suggest that physiotherapy has been acknowledged as a vital component of healthcare. This highlights the need of spreading information about physical therapy, which was stressed in earlier studies. Over the last several years, physiotherapists, along with other medical practitioners, have been confronted with difficulties in establishing their identity as medical professionals. In order to enhance clinical services and increase students' understanding of the field of physiotherapy, the rehabilitation facility in Turkey offered a diverse selection of instructional programmes (Cooper et al., 2016).

This study article includes a thorough survey undertaken to evaluate the level of awareness and understanding of physiotherapy among women in a particular community. Physiotherapy, being a dynamic and progressing healthcare discipline, provides several advantages in enhancing human function and mobility. Women in urban locations often have little awareness about the extent of

physiotherapy treatments available to them and the optimal moments to use them. The objective of this research is to investigate the level of awareness among women and pinpoint areas where there are gaps in information. The ultimate aim is to improve understanding and encourage women to make well-informed choices about their healthcare (Dash, 2019).

Methodology

An online survey was done utilizing social media platforms. The survey consisted of a questionnaire that included both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was sent to all participants using Google Forms, utilizing a URL that was disseminated over various social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Gmail. The distribution period lasted for one week. Data was collected and then analysed (Dash, 2019).

Results

- The results were computed directly using Google spreadsheet in terms of frequency distribution and descriptive statistics. The research was carried out on a cohort of 110 females in a community setting in Bangalore.
- **Response rate:** The questionnaire was sent to a total of 110 participants. All 110 participants promptly completed the questionnaire and submitted it to the researcher on the same day, resulting in a response rate of 100%.

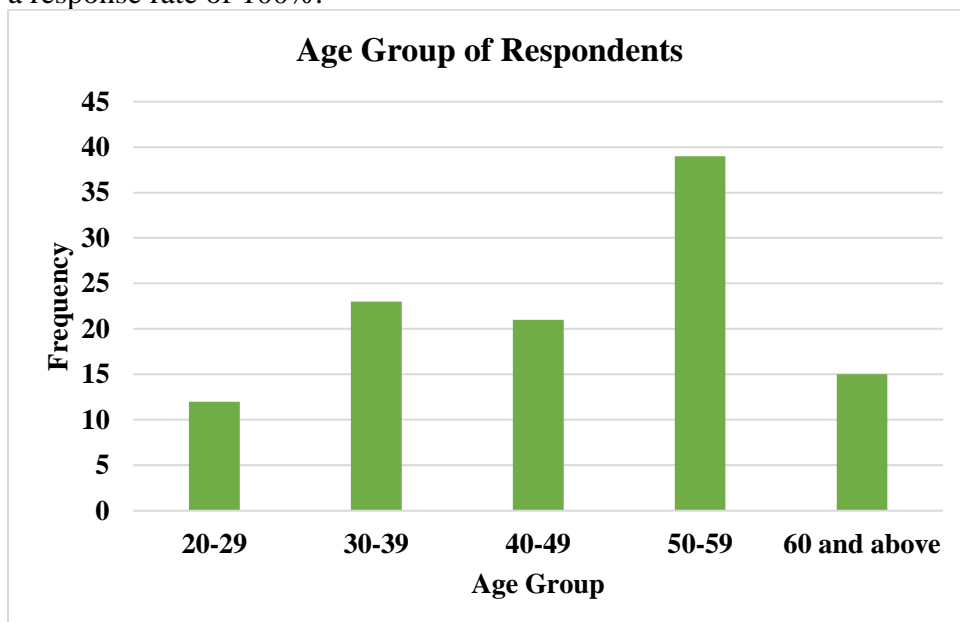


Figure 1: Age Group of Respondents

- **Physiotherapy Awareness:** It is noteworthy that 79% of the surveyed women demonstrated familiarity with physiotherapy. Physiotherapy is a growing profession that may provide benefits to a larger number of individuals as awareness about it increases.

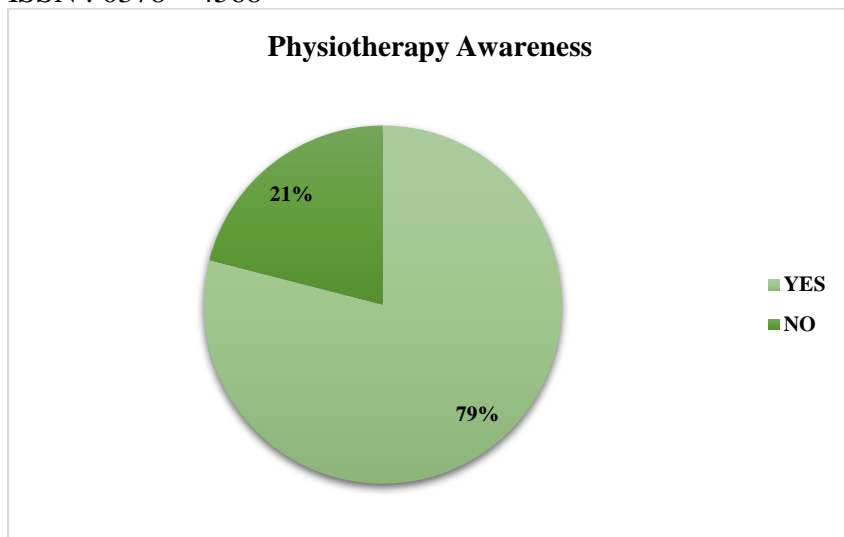


Figure 2: Awareness of Physiotherapy

- **Women who received Physiotherapy:** The majority of participants in my research are between the age range of 30-39 years. Among the women surveyed, 67% reported having undergone physiotherapy treatment at some point in their lives. However, the majority of them lacked clarity about the nature of the therapy they got.

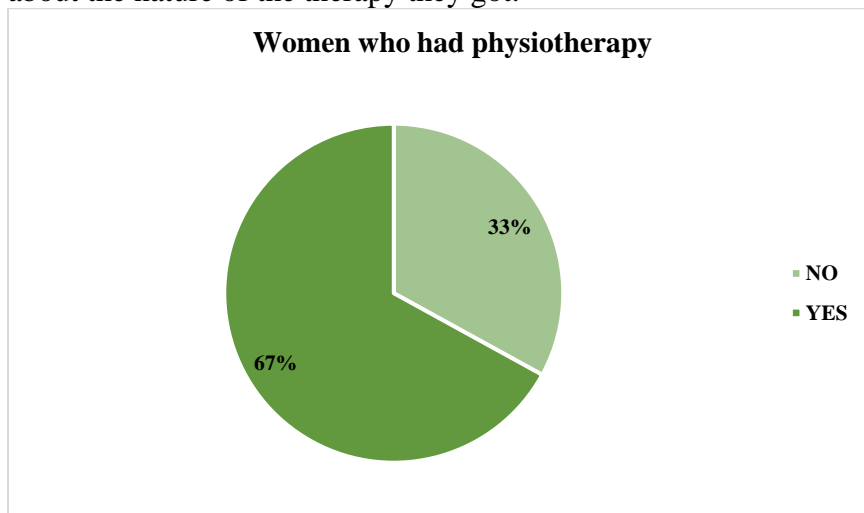


Figure 3: Women who had physiotherapy

- **Physiotherapy as a Profession:** Regarding the profession of physiotherapy, 66% of respondents who were knowledgeable about it said that it is excellent. Given the rising prevalence of somatic discomfort, postural problems, and obesity, pursuing this job is a favourable choice.

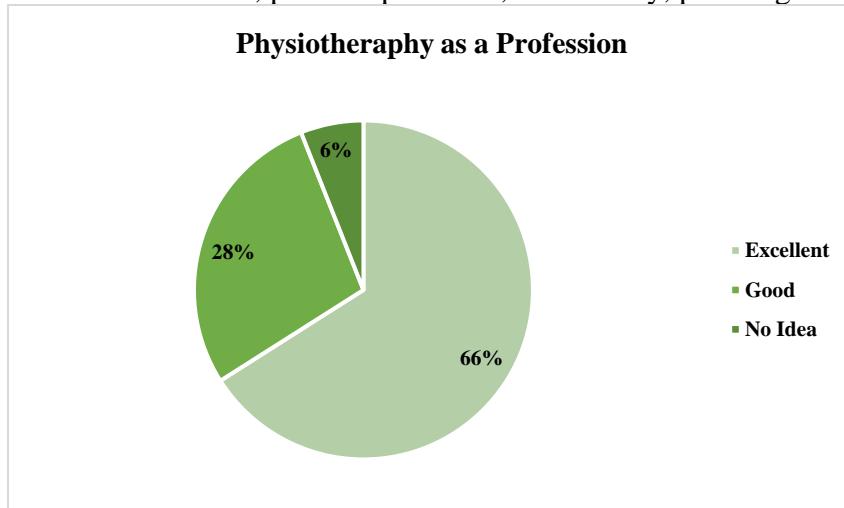


Figure 4: Physiotherapy as a Profession

- Physiotherapy Scope:** The majority of respondents were aware that physiotherapists are capable of treating orthopaedic and sports injuries. When questioned about the function of physiotherapy in pregnancy, labour, and geriatrics, they had little knowledge.

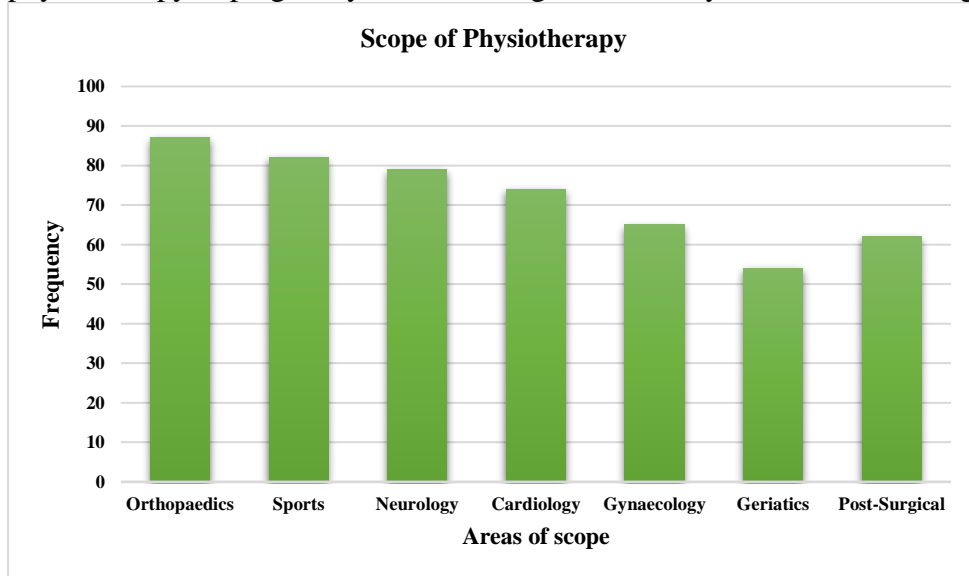


Figure 5: Scope of Physiotherapy

- Physiotherapy for pain management:** 72% of respondents are knowledgeable and believe that physiotherapy is an exceptional method for managing pain. 27% of individuals believe that physiotherapy does not address pain management.

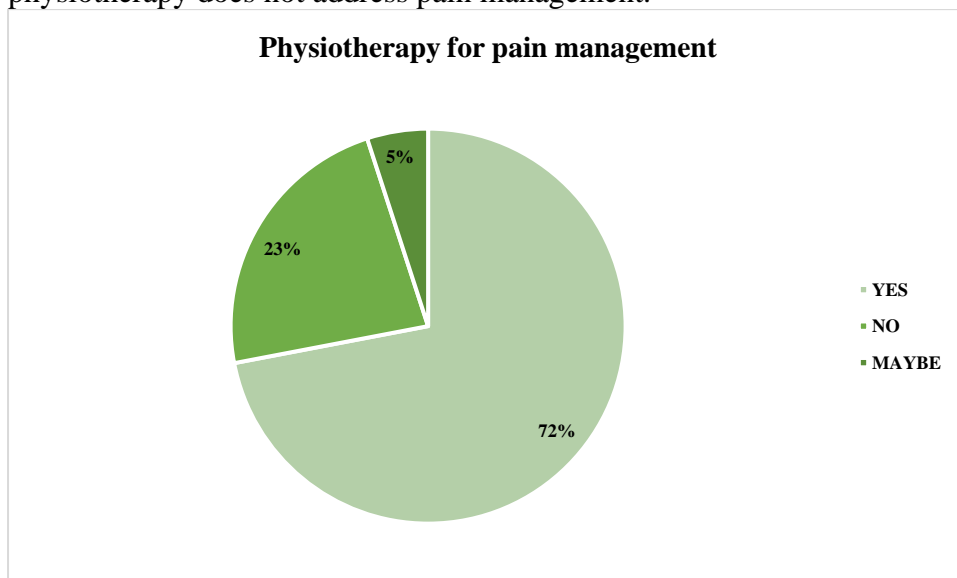


Figure 6: Physiotherapy for pain management

- Physiotherapy treatment cost:** Approximately 78% of the respondents believe that the expenses associated with physiotherapy treatments are too high for those belonging to the middle class. Approximately 14% of individuals were uncertain about whether they had paid the correct price for the services they received.

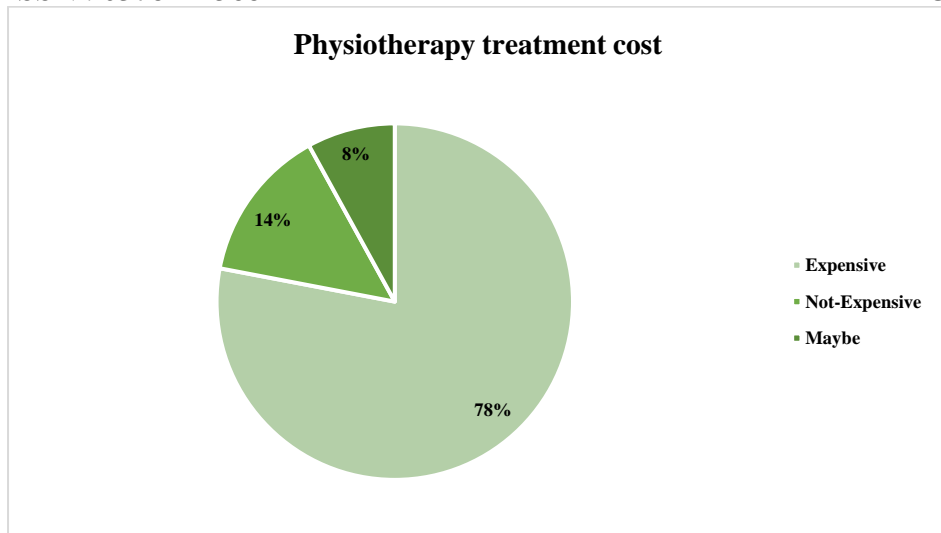


Figure 7: Physiotherapy treatment cost

- **Timely intervention for efficient recovery:** 46% of participants strongly agree that the prompt implementation of physiotherapy expedites the healing process. While 14% of the participants expressed disagreement with this viewpoint.

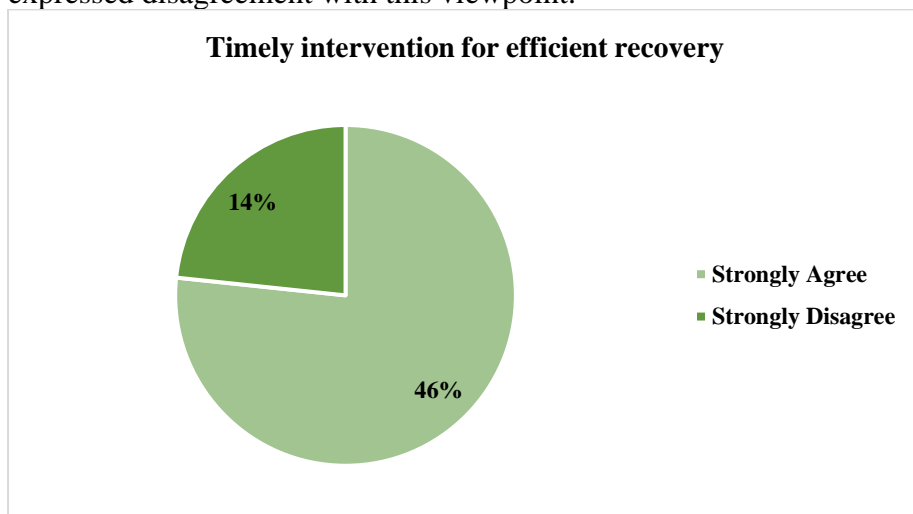


Figure 8: Timely intervention for efficient recovery

- **Physiotherapy for OBG:** A significant proportion of women, namely 43%, had a certain level of awareness of the potential benefits of physiotherapy in managing pregnancy-related conditions. However, only a small number of individuals have a rudimentary understanding of the significance of physiotherapy during delivery and in the postnatal period. 30% of participants believe that physiotherapy does not have any significance in OBG.

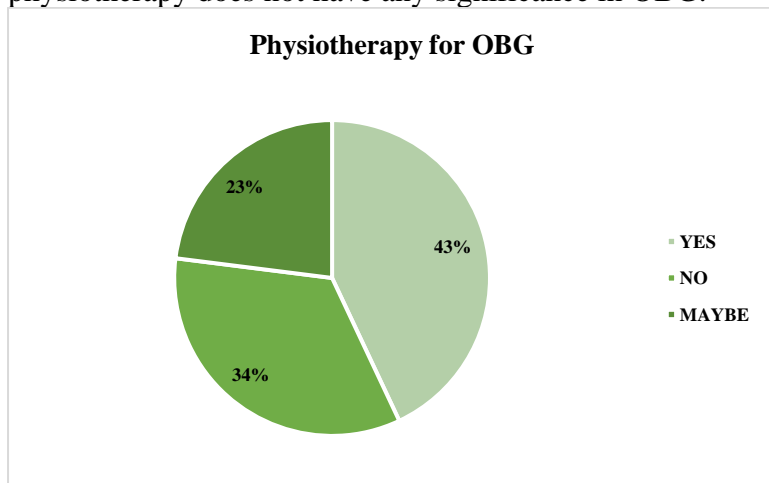


Figure 9: Physiotherapy for OBG

• **Physiotherapy for Osteoporosis Prevention & Management:** Physiotherapy's role in preventing and managing osteoporosis is recognised by 38% of respondents. 27% individuals exhibited uncertainty about osteoporosis and the usefulness of physiotherapy in such instances.

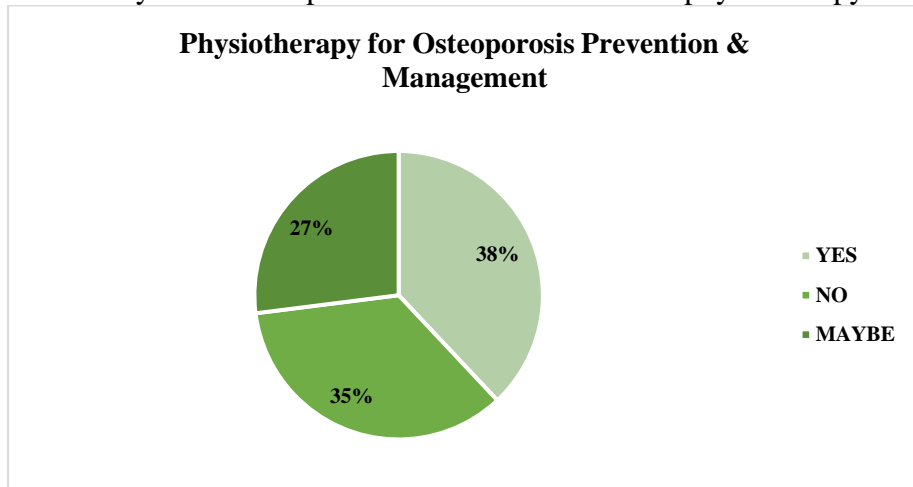


Figure 10: Physiotherapy for Osteoporosis Prevention & Management

• **Physiotherapy for Urinary Incontinence:** It is noteworthy that around 47% of female respondents demonstrated awareness of the significant influence of regular Kegel exercises on the pelvic floor muscles of women.

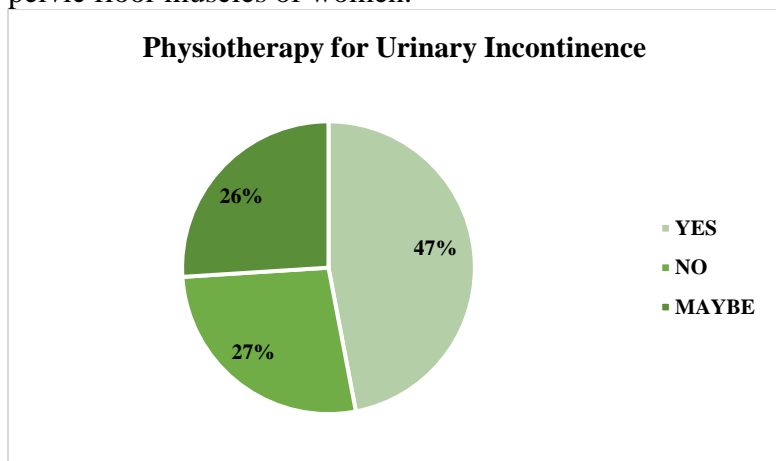


Figure 11: Physiotherapy for Urinary Incontinence

• **Physiotherapy information source:** Approximately 46% of participants obtained their first knowledge of Physiotherapy from acquaintances and relatives who had previously received physiotherapy treatment. The contribution of print media as an information source for physiotherapy was minimal, amounting to just 7%.

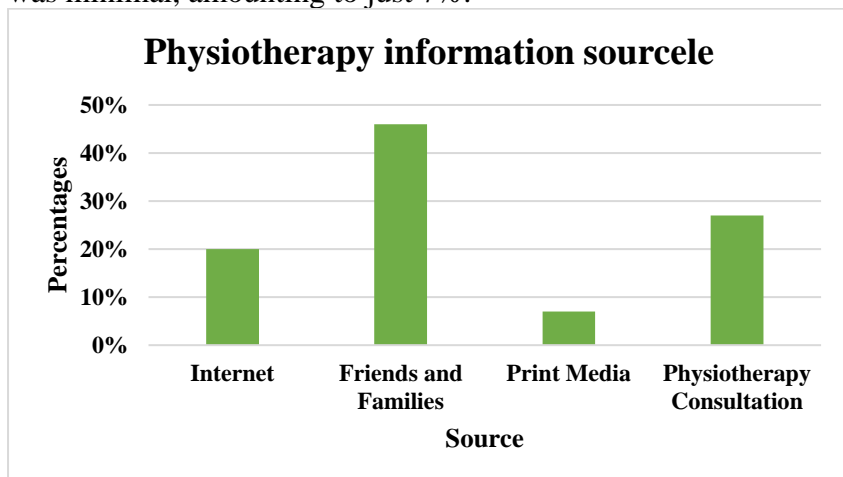


Figure 12: Physiotherapy information source

Discussion

The survey results provide insights into the present level of awareness and understanding of physiotherapy among women in the examined population. The survey found that 79% of the participants showed knowledge of physiotherapy. However, there were considerable gaps in their comprehension of the extent and advantages of physiotherapy services, especially in certain specialised fields. A significant discovery is the restricted understanding of the possible benefits that physiotherapy might provide in different contexts. Although residing in urban regions, where information is expected to be more readily available, women nonetheless possess an incomplete comprehension of the extent of physiotherapy services. This highlights the need for focused teaching programmes to narrow the gap between broad awareness and detailed understanding of the uses and advantages of physiotherapy.

The study findings also highlight the communication difficulties that exist between physiotherapists and their patients. A considerable proportion of women who had undergone physiotherapy treatment exhibited a lack of lucidity on the essence of the therapy they got. This highlights the need of proficient communication between healthcare practitioners and patients in order to guarantee a mutual comprehension of treatment strategies and anticipated results. Furthermore, the research highlighted the need of increasing knowledge in certain domains such as pregnancy-related ailments, osteoporosis prevention, and urinary incontinence treatment. Women exhibited different degrees of knowledge in these areas, indicating the possibility of focused educational initiatives to enlighten them about the role of physiotherapy in resolving these health issues. The significance of information sources in influencing women's knowledge of physiotherapy was also evident. Although personal networks, including friends and family, had a substantial impact on early awareness, the contribution of print media was limited. This highlights the need of using social media and other modern platforms to efficiently distribute information about physiotherapy.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to assess the level of awareness and knowledge among female residents in a particular region regarding physiotherapy. The investigation yielded a combination of favourable and worrisome findings. Findings from the study revealed that a significant majority (79%) of the women surveyed had varying degrees of exposure to physiotherapy. However, the survey also revealed gaps in their knowledge regarding the wide range of physiotherapy and its potential benefits, especially in relation to pregnancy, labour, and elderly patients. While a majority of respondents recognise physiotherapy as a profession, there is a clear need for more focused educational activities to enhance overall understanding. Many women who had received physiotherapy treatment expressed uncertainty regarding the nature of the therapy they had undergone. This indicates a potential communication barrier between practitioners and patients.

Through this study, specific areas that could potentially benefit from further knowledge were identified. This article covers the role of physiotherapy in treating pregnancy-related disorders, preventing osteoporosis, treating urinary incontinence, and the wide range of services available. In addition, it is important to utilise different platforms, including social media, to enhance awareness and comprehension. Ultimately, it is crucial to actively raise awareness and understanding of physiotherapy among women in the community. This will help create a favourable perception of the profession and ensure that its services are utilised promptly, while also ensuring that decisions are made with reliable information. Healthcare practitioners have the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the health and well-being of women in the community by addressing their identified knowledge gaps.

References

1. Alhowimel, A., AlOtaibi, M., Radford, K., & Coulson, N. (2018). Psychosocial factors associated with change in pain and disability outcomes in chronic low back pain patients treated by physiotherapist: a systematic review. *SAGE open medicine*, 6, 2050312118757387.

2. Ali, S., Javed, H. R., Khan, K., Shahid, H., Hanif, F., Batool, F., & Mansoor, Z. (2023). Awareness of Physical Therapy among Different Medical Professionals. *Pakistan Journal of Medical & Health Sciences*, 17(01), 106-106.
3. Barton, C. J., King, M. G., Dascombe, B., Taylor, N. F., de Oliveira Silva, D., Holden, S., ... & Shields, N. (2021). Many physiotherapists lack preparedness to prescribe physical activity and exercise to people with musculoskeletal pain: a multi-national survey. *Physical Therapy in Sport*, 49, 98-105.
4. Cooper, I., Delany, C., & Jenkins, S. (2016). Comparing patients' and physiotherapists' views of professionalism and professional standing: an Australian perspective. *Physical Therapy Reviews*, 21(1), 38-73.
5. Dash, S. S. (2019). Awareness of physiotherapy & its scope among women in a community-a survey. *Int J Physiother Res*, 7(6), 3331-35.
6. Glover, W., McGregor, A., Sullivan, C., & Hague, J. (2005). Work-related musculoskeletal disorders affecting members of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. *Physiotherapy*, 91(3), 138-147.
7. Heiwe, S., Kajermo, K. N., Tyni-Lenné, R., Guidetti, S., Samuelsson, M., Andersson, I. L., & Wengström, Y. (2011). Evidence-based practice: attitudes, knowledge and behaviour among allied health care professionals. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 23(2), 198-209.
8. Kearns, M., Ponichtera, N., Rucker, T., & Ford, G. (2014). Physical therapists as practitioners of choice: consumer knowledge of practitioner skills and training. *Journal of Physical Therapy Education*, 28(1), 64-72.
9. Khan, M. (2019). *Physiotherapist's view of gynecological physiotherapy scope of practice in Bangladesh* (Doctoral dissertation, Bangladesh Health Professions Institute, Faculty of Medicine, the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.).
10. Koranteng, Y. B., Adu-Bonsaffoh, K., & Oppong-Yeboah, B. (2023). Physiotherapy practice in women's health: awareness and attitudes of obstetricians and gynecologists in Ghana. *BMC Women's Health*, 23(1), 666.
11. Kumar, S. P., Sisodia, V., & Kumar, A. (2013). Evidence base for physiotherapy/physical therapy: A specialty-based quantitative trend analysis of articles. *Saudi Journal for Health Sciences*, 2(1), 23-30.
12. Mathye, D., & Narain, S. (2019). Do physiotherapists have a role to play in the sustainable development goals? A qualitative exploration. *South African Journal of Physiotherapy*, 75(1), 1-9.
13. Mbada, C., Olawuyi, A., Oyewole, O. O., Odole, A. C., Ogundele, A. O., & Fatoye, F. (2019). Characteristics and determinants of community physiotherapy utilization and supply. *BMC health services research*, 19(1), 1-10.
14. O'Donoghue, G., Cusack, T., & Doody, C. (2012). Contemporary undergraduate physiotherapy education in terms of physical activity and exercise prescription: practice tutors' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. *Physiotherapy*, 98(2), 167-173.
15. Okasheh, R., Al-Yahya, E., Al-Khlaifat, L., Almasri, N., Muhaidat, J., & Qutishat, D. (2019). Research Article Advancing Cardiorespiratory Physiotherapy Practice in a Developing Country: Surveying and Benchmarking.
16. Vikas, K. (2013). *Public Awareness Towards Physiotherapy: A Survey* (Doctoral dissertation, Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (India)).