

**CURRENT ROLE OF PHYSIOTHERAPY IN RESPONSE TO THE SOCIETY'S
CHANGING HEALTHCARE NEEDS**

Dr. Shikha Paasi, Assistant Professor, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth's Indutai Tilak College of Physiotherapy, Pune

Dr. Yogesh Patil, Assistant Professor, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth's Indutai Tilak College of Physiotherapy, Pune

Abstract

Health encompasses an individual's mental, physical, and social well-being; it is not limited to the absence of disease or illness. Physical therapy, also known as physiotherapy is a dynamic healthcare profession whose mission is to assist patients in attaining, sustaining, and regaining optimal physical health and function during their lives. Physiotherapy is a healthcare discipline whose objectives are to restore functionality, mobility, and quality of life by means of physical intervention and rehabilitation of impairments. Physical therapy encompasses a wide range of activities beyond clinical practice, including administration, education, consultation, and research. For physiotherapy to maintain its effectiveness, its services must be flexible enough to adapt to the evolving requirements of people and our healthcare system, in accordance with this essential premise. Physical therapy services may be provided simultaneously or in combination with other medical or rehabilitation therapies, such as occupational therapy be administered in a variety of contexts. Scientific evidence, as well as the qualifications and expertise of the physiotherapists providing the services, influence the profession. Physical therapy is a vocation that encompasses numerous subspecialties, such as pediatrics, geriatrics, orthopedics, sports, neurology, and wound care. Therefore, the primary focus and aim of this paper is to ascertain and optimize the potential for movement and quality of life of every individual through physical therapy-related promotion, prevention, treatment, and intervention, as well as adaptation and rehabilitation of health.

Keywords: *Physiotherapy, Healthcare, Society, Role.*

1. Introduction

The public is provided with useful health news and advice based on comprehensive research, which is brought to their attention by the significance of health, fitness, and wellbeing. When we take responsibility for our own health and well-being, Researchers possess the capacity to daily improve the health system by ensuring that our minds and bodies remain alert through the acquisition of the latest news and information on health and fitness from healthcare industry specialists (Cormie et al., 2018). Healthcare experts provide diagnosis and treatment for individuals across all age groups, ranging from infants to the elderly, who are experiencing medical issues or other health-related disorders, illnesses, or injuries that limit their mobility and capacity to carry out everyday activities as intended (Spruit et al., 2013). This category comprises people who have experienced a complete or partial loss of mobility and functional ability to accomplish daily tasks. Physical therapy encompasses the scientific and artistic aspects of physical rehabilitation and care. Physical therapy encompasses the delivery of treatment and services by a physical therapist, either autonomously or under their direction and oversight (Costello et al., 2011).

1.1 Role of Physiotherapy in Society's Healthcare Needs

The majority of the time, physical therapy is used to treat women's problems that are associated with the female reproductive system, childbirth, and postpartum treatment. Pelvic discomfort, urine incontinence, pregnancy and postpartum periods, and other problems connected with pelvic floor dysfunction are some of the ailments that fall under this category. Through a number of studies, it has been established that physical therapy can raise the likelihood of pregnancy in women who are experiencing infertility (Dean et al., 2011).

A physical therapist (PT) is the one who is responsible for providing physical therapy services. On occasion, a physical therapist assistant (PTA) will also provide treatments while working under the supervision of the PT. It requires communication between therapists, patients, other medical experts,

families, and communities, as well as between patients and other professionals (Foster and Delitto 2011).

In accordance with the American Physical Therapy Association (2001), physiotherapists are health professionals who possess a high level of expertise and are able to work independently. They are responsible for providing clients with physiotherapy that is both safe and of high quality. A person's maximal mobility and functional capacity may be promoted, developed, maintained, and restored via the practice of physical therapy, which is the branch of medicine that is responsible for this throughout their whole lives (Glover et al., 2005). In addition to health adaptation and rehabilitation, the principal aim and objective of this organisation is to identify and optimise the potential for movement and quality of life of every individual through promotion, prevention, treatment, and intervention (Griffin et al., 2016).

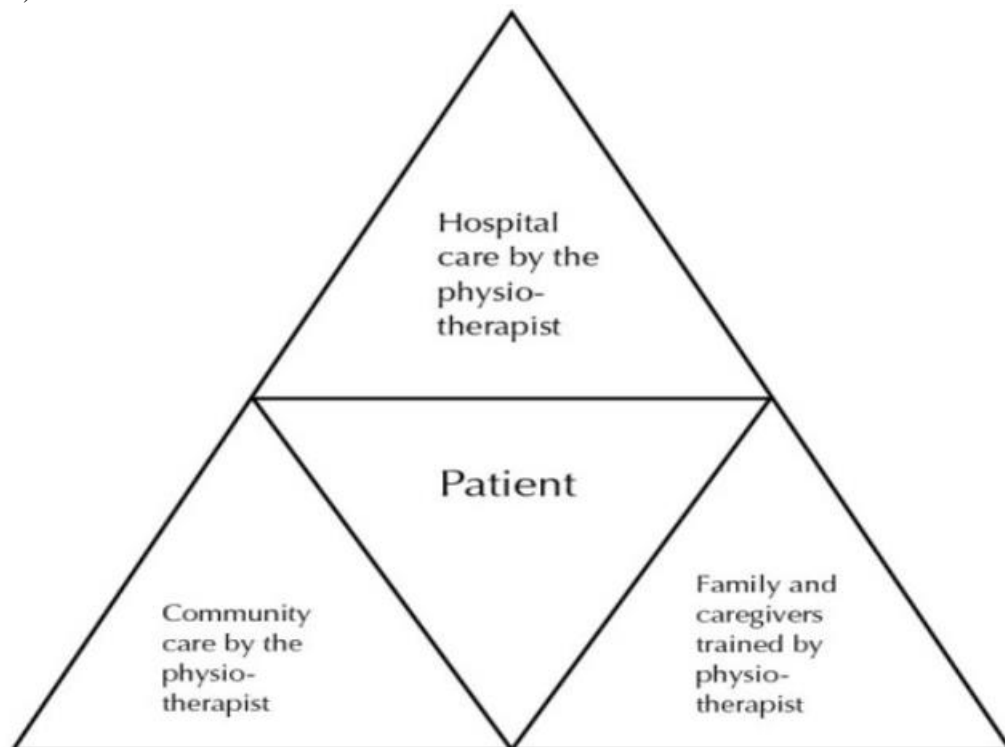


Fig.1: Model of Physiotherapy care in Indian societies

(Source: Hammond, 2013).

1.2 Importance of Physiotherapy

Health, lifestyle, and quality of life are all areas that the profession is dedicated to promoting. This comprehensive approach involves a wide variety of therapeutic treatments and therapeutic aids that are both physical and physiological in nature. The rehabilitation process for people who have had a stroke is significantly aided by the application of physiotherapy. The treatment of children who have cerebral palsy is significantly aided by it, and it also plays an important part in the rehabilitation of the cardiovascular and respiratory systems (Hammond, 2013). The primary goals of physical therapy are to evaluate mobility without limitations and enhance quality of life. Physical therapy include prevention, treatment, intervention, habilitation, and rehabilitation. The term "wellbeing" comprises not just physical health but also psychological, emotional, and social health (Scurlock-Evans et al., 2017). Physiotherapy employs a range of pain-alleviating methods in its healing process, such as interferential therapy, ultrasonic treatment, short wave diathermy, wax therapy, and muscle strengthening exercises. Physiotherapy is a form of treatment that assists in the restoration of mobility and function in individuals who have been impacted by accidents, illnesses, or disabilities. The education that is provided in physical therapy differs widely from nation to country around the globe (Stapleton et al., 2013). Professional degrees and programmes at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels may comprise physical therapy training, which may begin with entry-level work experience in hospitals and outpatient clinics (Han et al., 2019).

In order to practice under a specialty, the majority of physical therapists are required to have completed further training courses in physical therapy. Universities permit physical therapists to enroll in their health sciences and rehabilitation-related programmes of study in order to award credit for coursework completed in colleges (Polverino et al., 2017). Technologists and assistants are granted the opportunity to pursue a physiotherapy bachelor's degree at the university level upon the effective completion of their technical college diploma. Due to variations in physiotherapy legislation across states, the eligibility requirements for a physical therapist license may differ even within the same state (Harmon et al., 2019).

2. Literature Review

Jenkins (2016) stated that the therapy for a wide range of cardiopulmonary conditions, as well as before and post-operative care for patients undergoing cardiac or pulmonary surgery is provided by physiotherapy. In this particular area of expertise, the primary objectives consist of enhancing both endurance and functional independence. For the management of pulmonary complications, heart attacks, post-coronary bypass surgery, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and pulmonary fibrosis, among other ailments, cardiovascular and pulmonary medicine specialisation may be advantageous.

Jette (2012) examined that the field of geriatric physical therapy encompasses a wide range of concerns that involve individuals as they go through the natural process of ageing; however it is often centered on the elderly population. There are a number of problems that impact a large number of individuals as they age. This category includes the provision of therapy for conditions such as kidney and joint replacement, arthritis, cancer, geriatric incontinence, and balance impairments.

Kellogg and Fuller (2014) researched that integumentary medicine is focused with the treatment of problems that affect the skin and all of the organs that are involved with it, according to study that was conducted. The most frequent types of injuries are wounds and burns, which are treated using surgical instruments, mechanical lavage, bandages, and topical drugs to remove necrotic tissue and encourage tissue healing. Wounds and burns are two of the most common types of injuries. Exercise, the treatment of edema, the use of compression garments, and splinting are some of the additional therapeutic approaches that are regularly utilised.

Landry et al. (2016) researched that the physical therapy that focuses on the diagnosis, management, and Physical therapy under the chiropractic branch is utilised to treat disorders and injuries of the musculoskeletal system, including rehabilitation subsequent to orthopaedic surgery. This specific specialisation of physical therapy is often seen in clinical settings that are in the outpatient category the vast majority of the time. After-operative orthopaedic surgeries, fractures, acute sports injuries, arthritis, sprains, strains, back and neck pain, spinal complications, and amputations are a few of the numerous additional conditions that orthopaedic treatment addresses. A physical orthopaedics specialist can be of assistance to those who have been injured or who have been diagnosed with an illness that affects the muscles, bones, ligaments, or tendons.

Main and George (2011) examined that paediatric therapy provides support in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of infants, children, and adolescents afflicted with acquired, proliferative, neuromuscular, skeletal, or congenital abnormalities and disorders. It has been suggested that paediatric therapy is helpful in all of these areas. The primary goals of the therapies are to enhance the patient's gross and fine motor abilities, as well as their balance and coordination, as well as their strength and endurance.

McKinney et al. (2018) discussed that physiotherapy is a specialization that is constantly changing and improving, and it is applicable to both malignant and non-malignant disorders. Rehabilitation is increasingly seen as a crucial component of the clinical route for both categories of patients. This is because early diagnoses and innovative medicines are making it feasible for patients to live longer, which in turn enables them to operate with a minimal degree of dependence and improves their quality of life.

Medica (2020) reported that the conditions that affect the cardiopulmonary system react favorably to physiotherapy intervention. Patients who suffer from shortness of breath, compromised endurance, and difficulty conducting activities of daily living may potentially benefit from a considerable increase

in their quality of life via the use of guided exercise and resistance programming. Counseling regarding risk factors, education of the patient to prevent future recurrences, and behavior adjustment are also included in the intervention process. Patients who have undergone heart surgery are encouraged to begin physiotherapy as soon as possible in order to avoid the patient from experiencing a decline in their strength and function.

Nicholls and Gibson (2010) reported that the importance of health, fitness, and wellbeing involves providing the general people with information and advice on practical health matters that are based on substantial study. By taking responsibility for our own health and well-being, researchers have the ability to enhance our health on a daily basis. This may be achieved by ensuring that both our thoughts and bodies are up to date with the most recent news and information regarding health and fitness that has been compiled by professionals working in the healthcare business.

3. Objectives

- To evaluate the efficacy of physiotherapy interventions in addressing the changing healthcare needs of the general public.
- To explore how physiotherapy use different themes to meet current healthcare demands.
- To assess how well modern physiotherapy therapies meet society's health needs.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research design

The research was conducted using the qualitative research. By implementing this methodology, it was possible to comprehend and interpret the sentiments and perceptions of the participants concerning the phenomenon under investigation in order to fulfil the research objective.

4.2 Participants

The research utilised semi-structured interviews with the participants. The interviews were conducted by qualitative interviewing-trained researchers. All of the researchers were certified female physiotherapists who possessed diverse professional backgrounds and expertise in areas such as population health, musculoskeletal health, chronic conditions, and professional affairs.

The researchers conducted the interviews in three formats: in-person at their university, via telephone, or through the use of video conferencing technology. In general, the researcher did not develop personal relationships with the participants; nevertheless, there were instances where the participant was recognised by the researcher as a postgraduate programme peer or professional colleague. While this may have impacted the responses of some participants, the diversity of opinions expressed indicated that they were at ease discussing their experiences (Thomas et al., 2022). A prompt from the interview guide was utilised during the interview to facilitate discussion and allow for a comprehensive exploration of the objective.

4.3 Data collection

Following each interview, reflexive memoranda were composed detailing the potential influence of the researcher's positionality on the process of data generation and analysis. Iteratively, the summaries and emergent findings from each interview were incorporated into subsequent interviews. The interviews were digitally audio-recorded for a duration of 60 minutes and subsequently transcribed. The data were analyzed using an inductive thematic analysis framework. The initial phase involved becoming acquainted with the data. This required each member of the research team to read and reread the transcripts independently. Then, preliminary open coding was performed to identify data pertinent to the objective. (Turner and Clegg 2014). The themes underwent revision and enhancement through the researchers' participation in critical dialogues. In the process of respondent validation, ten participants were provided with the preliminary data analysis and asked to verify that the results accurately reflected their own experiences.

5. Results

In the course of the study, nearly twenty-three participants participated. With a mean of 16.7 years qualified, the range was 1–37. The data analysis confirmed that saturation has been reached. There

were themes identified: Underpinning philosophy of practice, Evolving position broadens the field of practice, facilitating the transition of the future workforce into practice.

Data analysis confirmed by following themes:

5.1 Underpinning philosophy of practice

Participants believe a comprehensive treatment philosophy that enhances patient wellness guides the job of the physiotherapist. This includes optimizing patient potential. Functional restoration, goal setting, and self-management are increasingly important in evaluations, treatment, and discharge planning. Participants reported a rising awareness of physiotherapists as health promoters, but attitudes of their role varied. Despite the popularity of physical activity promotion, some participants lacked the time, skills, or confidence to engage in other health promotion areas.

Promoting health was influenced by the physiotherapist's perception of its relevance to the patient's condition, with some participants not considering it necessary if not directly related to the identified issue. Participants were hesitant to engage in health promotion due to concerns that it may negatively impact their "therapeutic relationship" if they did not perceive the relevance of include it in their management.

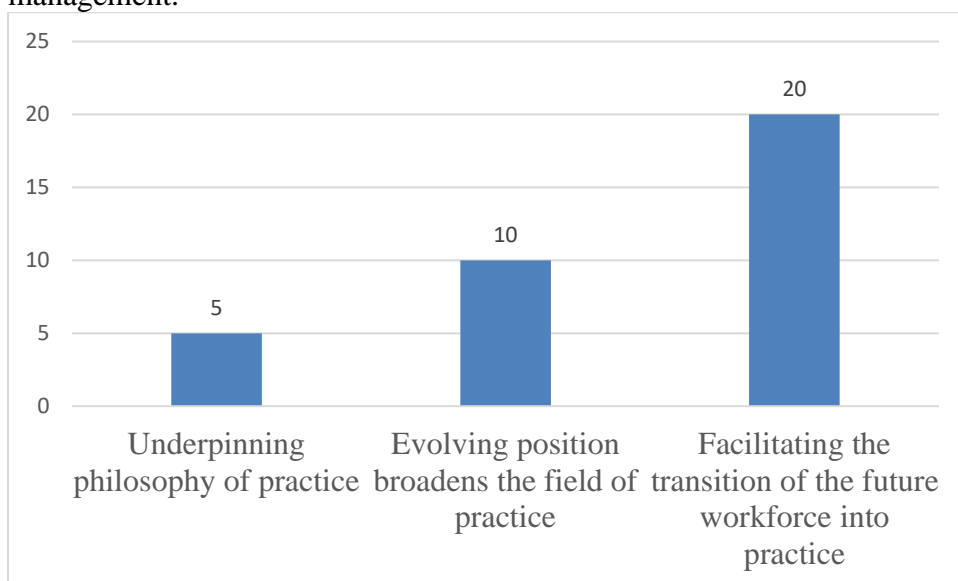


Fig. 2: Data analysis confirmed saturation themes

Participants believed that the environment and context of physiotherapy affect their philosophy of practice. Providing comprehensive care in an acute situation can be challenging owing to time restrictions and a focus on short-term patient management. Health promotion messages were simpler to approach in locations with more time for patient connections, although holistic care had a larger focus.

5.2 Evolving position broadens the field of practice

The participants' perception of their function was evidently undergoing change. They perceived their professional responsibilities expanding as they encountered a wider range of options, including specialised jobs and non-clinical sectors. The participants also held the belief that physiotherapists have a wide range of abilities and were adaptable, having the capacity to continuously develop and assume various responsibilities.

There was a perception that professional boundaries were becoming less clear, causing physiotherapists to deviate from their conventional function and take on responsibilities of other specialists. On the other hand, several individuals expressed worries that the blurring of professional boundaries might potentially lead to the risk of exceeding their authorised area of expertise. Participants acknowledged that collaborating with other team members and implementing integrated care were crucial aspects of the position. These resources not only facilitated physiotherapists in acquiring knowledge from their team members but also enabled them to provide comprehensive therapy. It was emphasised that having knowledge about different services where individuals might be directed to is crucial in supporting their position as health promoters.

5.3 Facilitating the transition of the future workforce into practice

Participants in an examination of the future physiotherapy workforce believed that the skill set of physiotherapy students had evolved from one in which they had more specific abilities understanding of the human body has evolved from anatomical precision to adaptability and the capacity to transform. It was also believed that greater efforts could be made to better equip graduates for their practical roles, given that they were frequently shielded from the intricacies encountered by "real life patients" by their educators. While some physiotherapists believed that this was to be expected given the importance of clinical and life experience in developing holistic skills, others believed that universities should provide more instruction on the role of students in health promotion and holistic care. The majority of participants regarded clinical placements not only as the ideal setting to gain an understanding of the physiotherapist's function, but also as critical for fostering students' understanding of health promotion and prevention.

However, it was emphasised that the university and placement providers held divergent expectations regarding the knowledge and skills required for the physiotherapy role and the types of placements that would facilitate this education. Additionally, there was a perception that a stronger partnership between the university and placement providers could improve the students' learning environment.

6. Conclusion

Physical therapy is an aspect of healthcare that focuses on enhancing, cultivating, preserving, and reinstating individuals' optimal movement and functional capacity throughout their lifespan.

Scientific evidence underpins the specialised methodology of each physiotherapy intervention discipline. The methodologies employed in the field of physiotherapy have undergone significant progressions since antiquity. There are specialty physiotherapists in the complex world of today, such as those who treat incontinence, traumatic knee injuries, stroke, and traumatic knee injuries, among other conditions. Physiotherapy is a fundamental component of the healthcare system, augmenting the physical functionality and mobility of people of all ages through the application of its knowledge and skills in movement science and rehabilitation. The profession comprises highly educated and autonomous professionals who work as physicians, educators, researchers, advisors, and managers. They operate in various healthcare environments, such as residences, communities, and several establishments and institutions. In addition to placing pride in delivering outstanding care to patients, physical therapy actively participates in endeavors that advance public health. It is not intended to replace consulting with a physiotherapist or medical expert in a field other than physiotherap, the information contained in this article is intended to enhance human health.

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