



Awareness & perception of physiotherapy intervention among medical practitioner & medical students: A cross sectional study

Dr. Priyadarshini Mishra^{1*}, Dr. BSL Vidhyadhari²

¹ Associate Professor, Institute of Health Sciences, Chandaka Road, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

² Assistant Professor, NIMS, College of Physiotherapy, OCHC Complex, Kharvel Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to conclude about the awareness and perception of physiotherapy interventions in medical practitioners and medical students.

Objective: This study is to examine awareness and perception of physiotherapy intervention in medical practitioners and medical students for treating specific cases.

Methods: It is a cross-sectional study design with a sample size of 500 medical practitioners and students.

Results: Results of the survey among the doctors regarding the treatment methods, infrastructure and its usage, role of physiotherapy in treating different diseased conditions and also in sports are very unsatisfactory

Discussion: The result of the present study seems to draw our attention to the fact that still medical practitioner and trainee are unaware of utility of physiotherapy interventions in different aspects in medical field.

Keywords: physiotherapy, awareness, hospital

Introduction

Interdisciplinary interaction within health care team is becoming more recognized as an effective method of improvising the health care delivery system. Interdisciplinary team work is achieved by recognizing and respecting the professional abilities of other team members & understanding how their skills many contribute to client care. According to the several literature review awareness is not that satisfactory specifically relating to specialized physiotherapy services.

These observations are reinforced by patient perceptions that doctors do not have an adequate knowledge & understanding of their profession.

Patients or clients themselves have show dissatisfaction with their general practitioners lack of knowledge of Physiotherapy services & the availability of alternative treatment. Some practitioners even prescribe various modalities & exercises as a part of their treatment protocol. The health care team should work synchronously to deliver better care to their patient providing equality to each individual member of team.

Globalizations are having a significant impact on health care & demand put on the health care professionals are increasing. With development of new medical techniques & the continuous influx of research, the quality of health services has indeed improved drastically. One of the growing health care sectors includes physical therapy or physiotherapy. Over the years there is a huge change over the attitude of perception & practice of physiotherapy among medical fraternity. In today's era, physiotherapists have started working in association with various practitioners delivery best treatment & recovery choices for their patients. While a doctor can diagnose an illness, relieve symptoms with medication, perform surgeries & suggest the very best treatment for a disease or injury, a physiotherapist can help a person to recover in a better & faster process.

Physiotherapy is concerned with identifying & maximizing movement potential, within the scope of promotion, prevention, treatment & rehabilitation. Physiotherapy is used in wide variety of disease condition like musculoskeletal problem (joint pain, stiffness, LBP etc), neurological disorders (stroke, PD, CP etc), cardiac pulmonary anomalies (COPD, Asthma, ASD, VSD, MI), obstetrics' & gynecological condition (pregnancy & PIVD), sports injury (ACL, shoulder impingement syndrome etc), geriatric problems (balance disorder, urinary incontinence), crush injury & rehabilitation of varying physiotherapy. It is a dynamic profession which uses a range

Hence this study was carried out using a questionnaire method to find out the current level of awareness and perception about physical therapy among the M.B.B.S. medical interns and doctors of various specialties.

This study analyses the awareness & perception of physiotherapy intervention by:-

- Establishing the perception of Physiotherapy profession among M.B.B.S students & varying medical practitioners of varying specialty.
- Identifying whether the medical student & medical practitioner would give referral to other health practitioner
- Establishing the knowledge of Physiotherapy services among medical students & medical practitioner

Methodology

Study design – Descriptive study

Study type – Cross sectional study

Sample size – 500

Sampling method – convenient sampling

Settings – NIMS, BBSR

Study duration – 3 months

Procedure

A survey was conducted using questionnaire which was protested and modified with a convenience sample of two physiotherapist and 5 doctors of different fraternity. Then, the questionnaires, its content, wording, instructions and ease of completion were revised accordingly.

Questionnaire comprised three sections (part A, part B, part C). Part A consists of subjective information, part B consist of source of information, part C consist of 11 close ended figure with multiple options, which were framed to enquire respondents of:

- Knowledge about physiotherapeutic interventions
- Physiotherapy services and availability
- Physiotherapy intervention for various diseased condition

The questionnaire was distributed in two government hospital of eastern Odisha. Responses were recorded inform of graph and bar diagrams. Participants were explained in detail regarding the purpose of the study; informed consent was obtained and questionnaires were distributed. Necessary steps were taken to maintain anonymity.

Results and Statistics

Statistical analysis was done using excel sheet 2007 and was represented in form of bars and pie chart.

Subjective Data

Doctors of two government hospitals were included in the survey where questionnaire is distributed to 750 members of all different specializations among which 500 people actively participated in the study. The surveys reflected the results as follows.

Source of information about physiotherapy

The survey reveals the highest percentage of common source of information to the doctors is mainly through newspapers/magazines (60%), books (59%), internet (54%), advertisement& television (51%), friend as therapist (46%), visits to physiotherapy school/ hospital/etc (43%), family member as client (41%), through films (39%), through friends (37%), radio (33%), family member as therapist & through physician(28%), friend as client (27%), through teacher/counselor/ coach (26%),person himself is a client (22%), friend was a client (18%), person having work experience/ volunteer (17%), and finally the least common source is participating in health fares/ career days (4%).

Result from questionnaire

Results of the survey among the doctors regarding the treatment methods, infrastructure and its usage, role of physiotherapy in treating different diseased conditions and also in sports are very unsatisfactory.

The following are the results of each figure.

- Q.no1: 24% of the doctors marked correct option (D), 31% marked individual options (A, B, C), 39% other multiple options, 3% all four options, 3% not attempted.
- Q.no2: 21% of them attempted correct answer (D), 26% marked individual options (A, B, C), 8% all four options, 42% other multiple options and 3% not attempted.
- Q.no3: 19% marked all four (A, B, C, D) which is correct, 22% marked individual options (A, B, C), 57% other multiple options and 2% not attempted the figure.

- Q.no4: 18% attempted correct answer (D), 18% individual options (A, B, C), 64% other multiple options and 2% not attempted.
- Q.no5: 6% marked right options (A, B, C), 36% marked individual options, 53% other multiple options and 8% did not attempt anything.
- Q.no6: 22% marked all four correct options (A, B, C, D), 26% marked individual answers, and 49% marked other multiple options and 3% not attempted.
- Q.no7: 28% attempted all four correct options (A, B, C, D), 21% marked individual options and 48% other multiple options and 3% did not attempt.
- Q.no8: 11% marked correct options (A, B, C, D), 23% marked individual options, 29% other multiple answers and 26% did not attempt the figure.
- Q.no9: 11% attempted correct (A, B, C, D), 32% marked other individual answers, 15% other multiple answers and 40% did not attempt.
- Q.no10: 19% marked all four (A, B, C, D) correct options, 19% marked individual answers, 53% other multiple options and 40% did not attempt the figure.
- Q.no11: 29% marked correct options (A, B, C, D), 26% marked other individual options, 41% marked other multiple options and 2% not attempted.

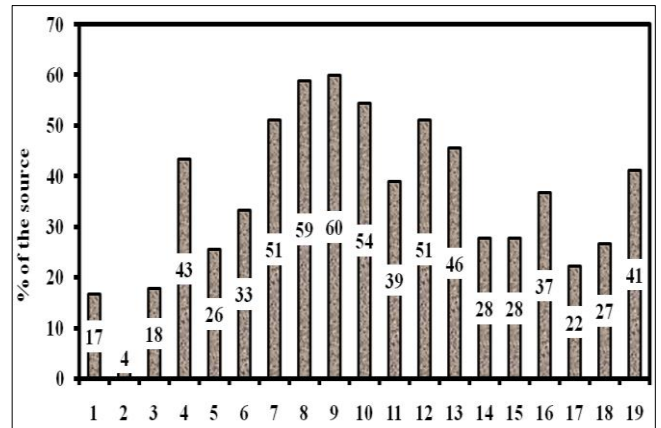
These results indicate that the survey reveals that even many of the doctors even now are unaware of physiotherapy.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to find out the awareness and perception of physical therapy among medical students and professionals. The present work indicates that there is a demand to educate about physical therapy among medical students and professional. The result shows awareness about physiotherapy is more through print media than other sources. The questionnaire (part C) which evolved around the awareness about intervention and specificity of its utility in various diseased conditions which reflected that still there is lack of knowledge about physiotherapy intervention among medical students and practitioner. In one study done in Nigeria it was reported that the medical students had a good knowledge and fair perception of physical therapy. This may be due to the formal education received about physiotherapy during their classroom lectures. The same education strategy can be adopted in Indian medical colleges to improve their awareness and knowledge. The author also suggested that inter-professional courses and communication should be given greater attention during medical training. Further the survey showed a lack in awareness about the speciality area that a physiotherapist can handle and cure of treatment techniques to restore movement & function within the body. However a study done by Dhiraj *et al* ^[10] in rural area regarding awareness of Physiotherapy among medical practitioners practicing in rural setup showed that doctors practicing in rural areas were unaware about physiotherapy services and importance of the same. A review by Anila Paul *et al*, 2015 ^[12] on awareness of Physiotherapy across the globe included studies conducted from 1979 till 2015 were included lead to the conclusion that there is less awareness regarding the field even in countries with high HDI. Hence measures to improve awareness are urgently required. Medical professionals play an important in referral of patients for physiotherapy besides direct contact. Hence awareness of

role of physiotherapy in various disease and dysfunctions is of paramount importance. Though there is adequate awareness about physiotherapy in musculoskeletal, sports and neurological dysfunction, it is limited to field of cardiovascular and pulmonary dysfunction i.e. cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation, physiotherapy post plastic surgery and women’s health or following pregnancy and gynecological and obstetric disorders and oncology. Lack of acknowledgement by them will indeed affect the patients who are unknown to the potential of the field in improving their quality of life. The scenario has not changed much since the survey done by Swati *et al*, 2002 where 43% patients were referred for orthopedic conditions, 34% for neurological disorders, 5% for gynecology and cardio-vascular and pulmonary conditions and 4% for pediatrics. More than a decade and importance of physiotherapy in these fields still remain under utilized. A study by Dr. Deepa Abhichandani *et al*, 2015”Awareness of various aspects of Physiotherapy among medical residents in India” had the similar results. The study concluded that physiotherapists should guide medical residents regarding physiotherapy and its various specialties, extensive knowledge of physiotherapy evaluation and management especially of community based rehabilitation and industrial health physiotherapy should be taught. Physiotherapy through the medium of exercise as key factor and patient education plays a major a role in lifestyle modification and prevention of metabolic disorders and cardiac risk factors however the awareness about the same was poor in both medical students and practitioner. Physical therapists as a part of the health care team play an essential role in reducing hospital stay, in providing a quicker recovery, and in rehabilitation for a better quality life. So, it is very important for medical doctors to be aware about how physical therapy plays an important role in maintaining the functional ability of an individual. Various studies show that there is lack of knowledge about physical therapy among medical professionals. A review of literature indicated that medical professional may not have an adequate knowledge of all physical therapy services and how physical therapy can help their patients’ disorders. Another study done among medical doctors also concluded by stating that they do not have an adequate knowledge and understanding of physical therapy profession. One of the solution to tackle this problem is to educate the future medical professionals. This could be achieved by introducing physical therapy related topics in their curricula. The awareness of physical therapy in medical professionals is beneficial in terms of timely and appropriate referral of patient which in turn results in a better patient care. The recent approaches and evidence based practice has rendered a new growth to physical therapy as a profession. Though this profession is gaining ground there still exists a need to create awareness among the other medical practitioner and students. Unless the other medical students and practitioner are well informed about the peculiar character of the physical therapist they will be disadvantaged when trying to receive appropriate health care and presumably the services of the physiotherapists to their patients. At the same time, if attempts are to be prepared to elevate the degree of awareness of physical therapy, it is necessary to evaluate the current attitude and knowledge of the medical interns and medical professional with different specialty.

Tables and figures



Source: of information regarding physiotherapy profession

Fig 1

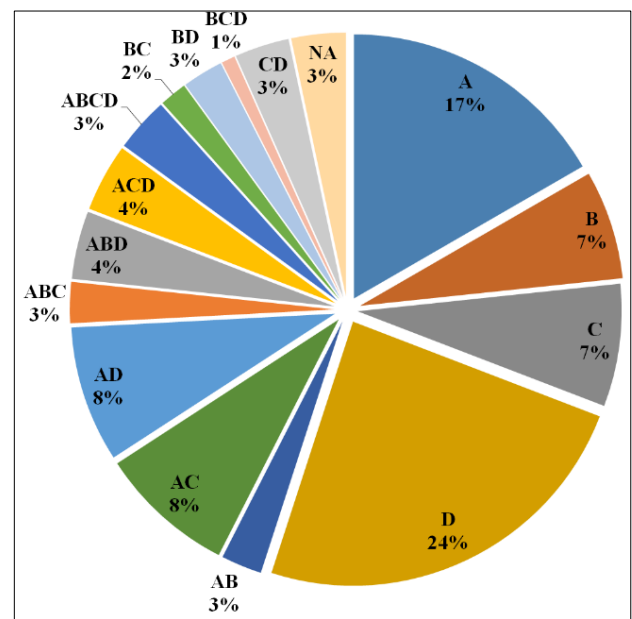


Fig 2: Percentage distribution of answer for question

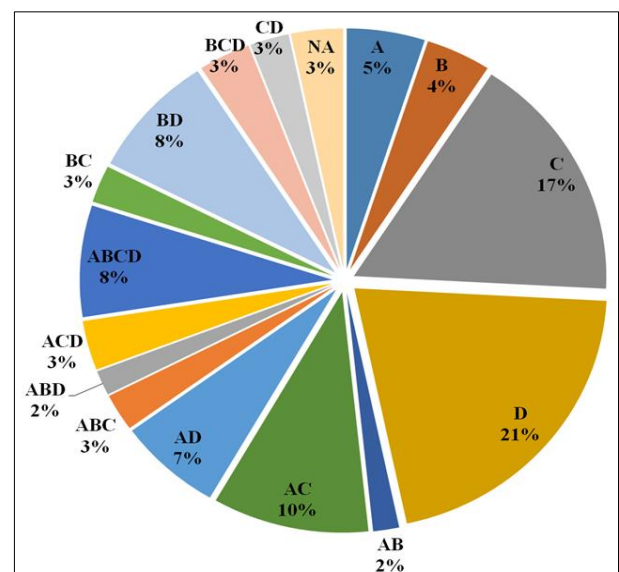


Fig 3: Percentage distribution of answer for question

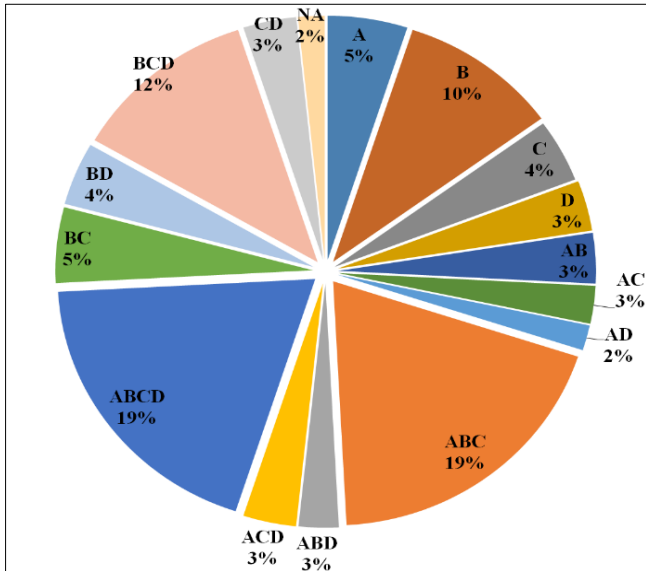


Fig 4: Percentage distribution of answer for question

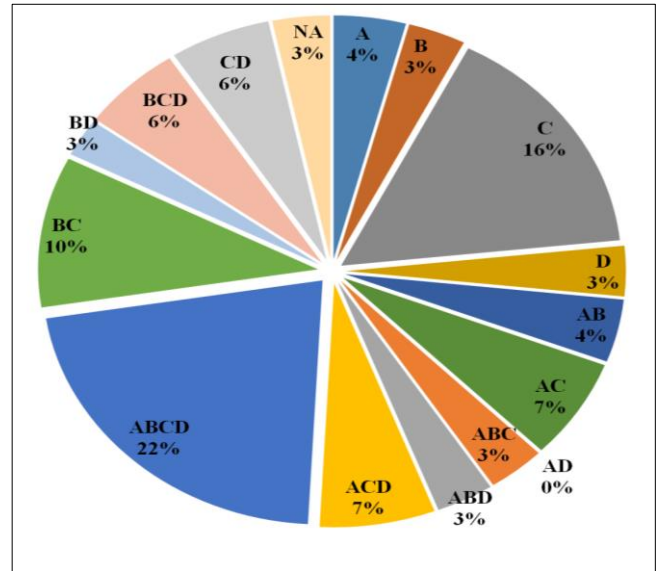


Fig 7: Percentage distribution of answer for question

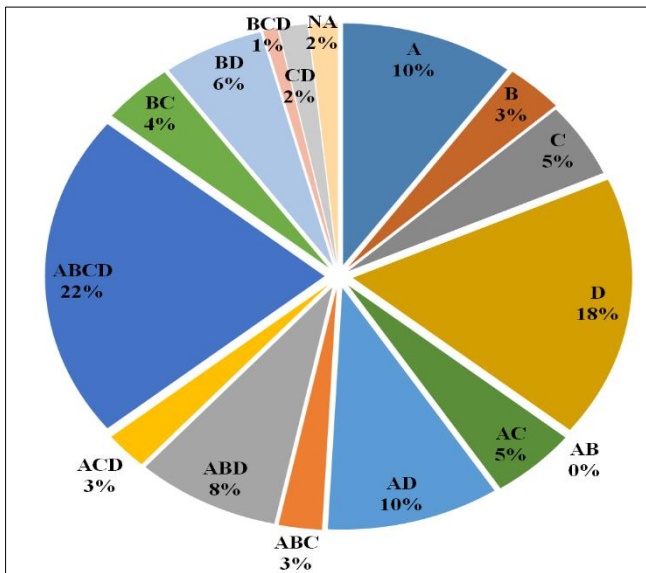


Fig 5: Percentage distribution of answer for question

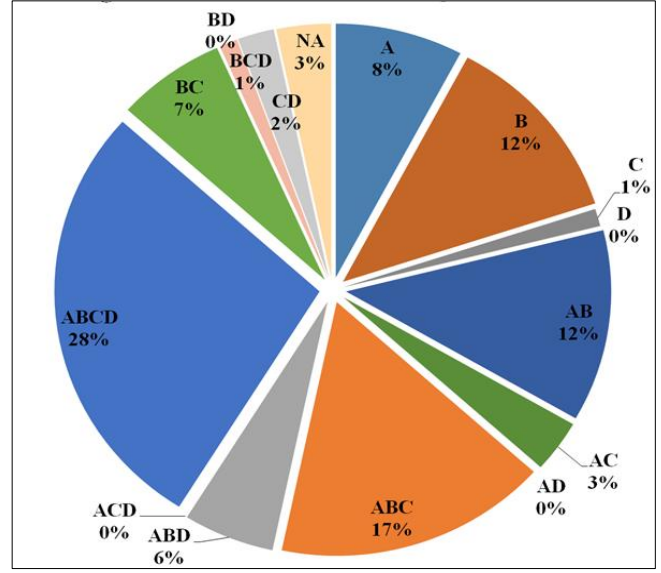


Fig 8: Percentage distribution of answer for question

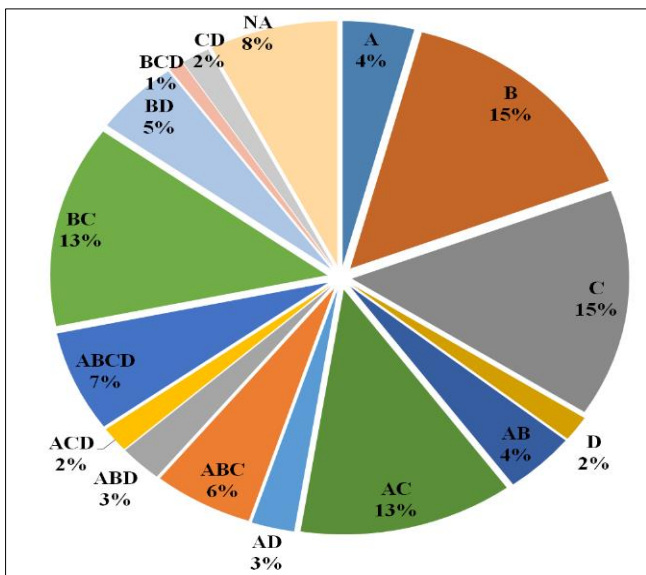


Fig 6: Percentage distribution of answer for question

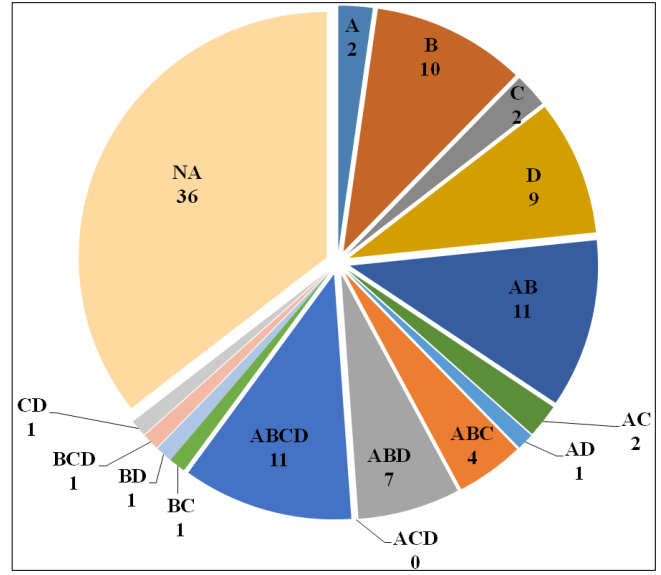


Fig 9: Percentage distribution of answer for question

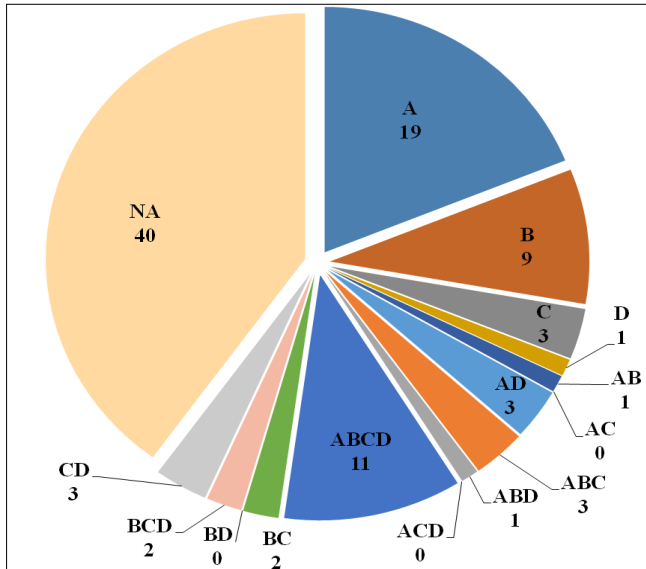


Fig 10: Percentage distribution of answer for question

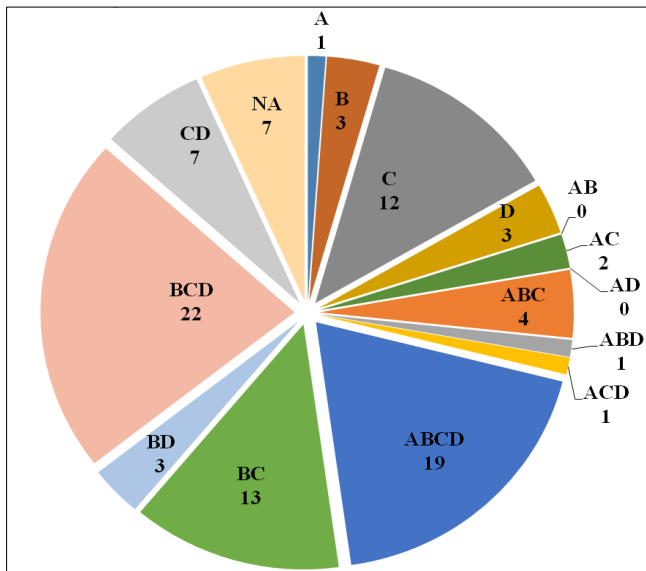


Fig 11: Percentage distribution of answer for question

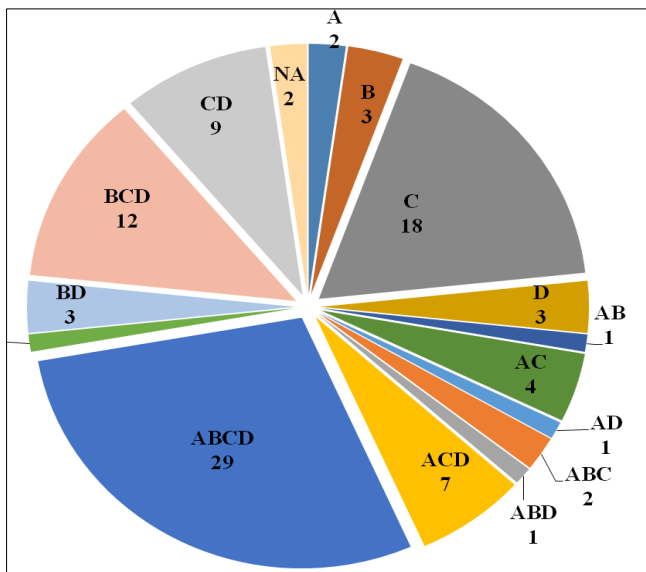


Fig 12: Percentage distribution of answer for question

Conclusion

The study clearly states that there is a lack of awareness and knowledge among medical students and practitioners about physical therapy. So there is a need of educating them about the physical therapy thereby achieving a better patient care.

Acknowledgments

We would like to extend deep sense of gratitude and acknowledgement to all Medical students and professional who participated in this study.

Recommendation

- It is highly recommended to include physiotherapy subjects in the curriculum of Medicine.
- It is strongly recommended for the researchers to have further studies in KAP and its predictors on physiotherapy which includes qualitative and quantitative part.

References

1. Physical therapy [Internet]. En.wikipedia.org. 2016 [cited 16 December 2016]. Available from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Physical therapy&oldid=754009927](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Physical%20therapy&oldid=754009927)
2. Policy statement. Description of physical therapy [World Confederation for Physical Therapy [Internet]. Wcpt.org. 2016 [cited 16 December 2016]. Available from: <http://www.wcpt.org/policy/psdescriptionPT>
3. Shimpi A, Writer H, Shyam A, Dabadghav R. Role of Physiotherapy in India – Role of Physiotherapy in India – A Cross-sectional Survey to Study the Awareness and Perspective among Referring Doctors. Journal Medical Thesis. 2014; 2(2):11-15.
4. Shete D, Thipse J, Kolase R. Awareness of Physiotherapy in Medical Practitioners at Rural Area. American Journal of Advances in Medical Science. 2013; 1:1.
5. Paul A, Mullerpatan R. Review of Physiotherapy Awareness across the Globe. IJHSR. 2015; 5(10):294-301.
6. Abichandani D. Awareness of Various Aspects of Physiotherapy among Medical Residents. International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR) [Internet]. 2013; 4(10):1460. 1465. Available from: <https://www.ijsr.net/archive/v4i10/SUB159055.pdf>
7. Vincent-Onabajo G, Mustapha A, Oyeyemi A. Medical students’ awareness of the role of physiotherapists in multidisciplinary healthcare. Physiotherapy Theory and Practice [Internet]. 2014; 30(5):338-344. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24397369>
8. Devanshi Doshi, et al. international journal of physiotherapy and research, Physiotherapy awareness in medical and non medical population: a social media study, 2017.
9. Arakkal Maniyat Shemjaz, et al. Int J Physiother Awareness and knowledge of physical therapy among medical interns – a pilot study. 2016; 3(2):170-176.
10. Dhirajr, et al. American Journal of Advances in Medical Science, Www. arnaca. Com. 2013; 1:1, Awareness of Physiotherapy in Medical Practitioners at Rural Area.
11. Rahul Krishnan Kutty, et al. G. J. B. A. H. S Knowledge, attitude, practice and associated factors of

12. Physiotherapy among Medical Doctors in Tigray, Northern Ethiopia – A cross sectional study, 2013.
13. Anil, *et al.* IJHSR, Review of physiotherapy across globe, 2015.
14. Acharya, *et al.* Physiotherapy awareness among clinical doctors in Nepal
15. Sadaf Shafqat, *et al.* Pakistan Journal of Rehabilitation Awareness of Physical Therapy as a Profession among Pre-medical Students of Private and Government Colleges. 2012; 1:2.