

SHORT COMMUNICATION

Knowledge, Attitude and Perception Towards Research Among Physiotherapy Students in Gujarat: A Cross-Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Research plays a pivotal role in advancing physiotherapy as an evidence-based profession. Understanding the knowledge, attitude, and perception of physiotherapy students toward research is essential to strengthen their academic and clinical training. To assess the perception, knowledge, and attitude of physiotherapy students in Gujarat towards research. A cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey (adapted from A. Arif et al., 2018) was conducted among undergraduate physiotherapy students using online forms. The questionnaire explored knowledge, benefits, practice, and perceptions of research. A total of 107 students participated, of which 90 were female and 17 were male. Among respondents, 84% strongly agreed that undergraduate research is necessary for the positive growth of physiotherapy, 12% agreed, and 4% disagreed. Furthermore, 75% strongly agreed and 25% agreed that research exploring physiotherapy treatment effectiveness is vital for professional development. The study highlights that physiotherapy students in Gujarat demonstrate a positive outlook toward research. They advocate for research to be included as a detailed subject in the final year, integrated with surveys, experimental projects, and reviews. Students acknowledge the importance of evidence-based practice in clinical training and support the adoption of advanced treatment approaches validated by global research.

Keywords: Research, Knowledge, Perception, Attitude, Physiotherapy

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INTRODUCTION

Physiotherapy has evolved as a healthcare discipline increasingly guided by evidence-based practice (EBP). Research enables physiotherapists to test interventions, validate treatment effectiveness, and improve patient outcomes (1,2). Student engagement in research during undergraduate education is crucial, as it nurtures analytical thinking, scientific reasoning, and readiness for clinical decision-making (3). Globally, studies indicate that physiotherapy and allied health students show interest in research but face barriers such as lack of training, time, and mentorship (4,5). In India, research exposure in undergraduate physiotherapy is still developing, with varying emphasis across institutions (6). Understanding the knowledge, attitude, and perception (KAP) of physiotherapy students towards research is necessary to strengthen education and prepare future clinicians for evidence-based practice. This study aimed to assess the KAP of physiotherapy students in Gujarat towards research. This study was undertaken to evaluate the knowledge, attitude, and perception of physiotherapy students in Gujarat toward research.

Objectives

1. To assess the knowledge of undergraduate physiotherapy students in Gujarat regarding research.
2. To evaluate their attitudes toward research as a part of academic learning.
3. To explore their perceptions of research as a contributor to professional growth.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design and included undergraduate physiotherapy students from Gujarat. A total of 107 students participated, comprising 90 females and 17 males. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from Arif et al. (2018), which was distributed through an online Google Form on digital platforms. The questionnaire consisted of items assessing students' knowledge of research, its effectiveness, benefits, and their perceptions regarding the inclusion of research in physiotherapy education. Responses were tabulated, and descriptive statistics, mainly percentages, were used to analyse and present the findings.

RESULT

A total of 107 participants completed the survey, of which 90 were females and 17 were males. Regarding the perception of research in undergraduate education, 84% of students strongly agreed that research during undergraduate studies is essential for professional growth, while 12% agreed and 4% disagreed. When asked about the effectiveness of physiotherapy treatment, 75% of respondents strongly agreed that research exploring treatment effectiveness is vital for the growth of the profession, and the remaining 25% agreed. These findings indicate that the majority of physiotherapy students acknowledge the significance of research in enhancing academic learning and clinical practice.

DISCUSSION

The findings show a high level of agreement among physiotherapy students that research is vital for professional growth and treatment validation. This is consistent with Arif et al. (2018), who reported that allied health students acknowledged the importance of research but highlighted training gaps (7). Our results align with studies in India and globally that emphasize undergraduate students' willingness to engage in research when proper mentorship and structured curriculum are provided (4, 6, 8). Students' preference for research as a final-year subject reflects the need for curricular integration, similar to recommendations by Bhandari et al. (2020), who advocated for embedding research methodology in physiotherapy training (9). The strong acceptance of evidence-based practice among students mirrors international trends, where physiotherapists increasingly rely on published evidence to refine interventions (2, 5, and 10).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that physiotherapy undergraduate students in Gujarat possess a positive knowledge, attitude, and perception towards research. They recommend introducing research as a comprehensive subject in the final year and emphasize its role in improving treatment effectiveness, academic growth, and professional competence. Evidence-based practice is widely accepted by students as an essential component of physiotherapy training.

Limitations

- Small sample size limited to one state (Gujarat).
- Self-reported responses may be subject to bias.
- Findings cannot be generalized to all physiotherapy students across India.

Recommendations

1. Integrate research methodology as a structured final-year subject in physiotherapy curricula.
2. Encourage undergraduate students to participate in projects, surveys, and reviews.
3. Provide workshops and training in evidence-based practice.]
4. Facilitate mentorship by faculty to support student-led research.
5. Expand the study to include multiple states for broader generalization.

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