



## Determine the Preference and Feedback of Patients about Treatment in Physical Therapy Out Patient Departments (OPDs)

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### ABSTRACT:

#### Background:

According to WCPT "Physical therapy or physiotherapy is a health care profession that provides treatment to individuals to develop, maintain and return to maximum movement and function throughout life. This includes providing treatment in situations where movement and function are threatened by aging, injury, disease or environmental factors."

Physical therapy is a branch of rehabilitative sciences which consists of certain exercise plans and different modalities used for treatment purposes to regain and improve physical health and activities of patients.

#### Objective:

Physical therapy is a renowned developing profession and improves not only the functional status but also enhances the quality of life in population with movement disorder. Its main emphasis is continuous improvement of knowledge and skills. The main purpose of this study was to determine the preference and feedback of Patients about treatment in physical therapy OPDs.

#### Methodology:

A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted with sample of 248 patients from different hospitals of Pakistan. A self structured questionnaire was designed and for convenience of patient it was also translated into Urdu language. The data was collected from October 2014 to March 2015. Data was analyzed using SPSS 20.

#### Results:

According to these results only 35.1 % patients were satisfied with physiotherapy treatment at government hospitals and majority of the patients (64.9%) wanted to take treatment from private clinics. The results indicated that (15.7%) patients were private, 26.6 % Entitled, 26.2% Panel patients and 31.5% patients were family members/friends. 41.1% Patients visited OPD for less than one week 28.2% patient's visited for more than one week and 76.6% took appointment before visit. 67.7% Patients had to wait for their session. 26.6% patients received 40 minute session. 61.7% patients gave their complete history. 57.7% Patients responded that the same physical therapist had given the session. 29.8% Physiotherapists were involved in giving treatment sessions to the patients 13.3% technicians, 10.5% assistants and 46.4% trainees. 83.5% of patients responded that their session just included electrotherapy. 25% Patients did not get any relief. 20.6% patients got 50% relief after 10 to 15 sessions and 27.8% got relief after 5 to 10 sessions. 13.3 % sessions were given by physiotherapy technicians, 10.5% by physiotherapy assistants' and 46.4% by physical therapy trainees and 29.8% by professional physical therapist

#### Conclusion:

It is concluded that majority of the patients were not satisfied by the physical therapy treatment at government hospitals and they preferred private clinics for treatment. The study also concluded that government hospitals need to increase the number of qualified physiotherapist so that patients receive proper protocols and treatment for their problems.

#### Keywords:

Perception, physiotherapists, physiotherapy OPDs

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### INTRODUCTION:

According to WCPT "Physical therapy or physiotherapy is a health care profession that provides treatment to individuals to develop, maintain and return to maximum movement and

function throughout life. This includes providing treatment in situations where movement and function are threatened by aging, injury, disease or environmental factors."

Physical therapy is a branch of rehabilitative



sciences which consists of certain exercise plans and different modalities used for treatment purposes to regain and improve physical health and activities of patients.<sup>(1)</sup>

This treatment helps individuals to restore their daily activities, helps them to perform their everyday activities as independently as possible. It helps to relieve pain as a result of any disease or any surgery. Physical therapy treatment helps people to regain their lost strength, mobility and fitness level to the extent that they become capable of living independent and make possible that they can stay in work as long as possible.<sup>(2)</sup>

A Physical therapist works for the promotion, prevention, intervention, habilitation and rehabilitation of a patient to increase one's quality of life and to improve the physical, psychological, emotional and social comfort of individuals.<sup>(3)</sup>

A physical therapist is capable to assess, inspect, diagnose, evaluate and treat a patient suffering from any type of physical injuries, disabilities or problems which are causing pain, decreased mobility and function.<sup>(4)</sup>

The management and treatment of the patients includes typical interventions and exercise plans which would help the patient to achieve long term fitness levels. Each individual requires separate examination, assessment, evaluation and treatment plan to decrease pain encourage mobility, restore function and avoid further disability.<sup>(5)</sup>

There are different areas in which physical therapy treatment is provided and it is considered as a specialty area.

These areas include Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy, Neuromuscular Physical Therapy, Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Physical Therapy, Pediatrics Physical Therapy, Geriatrics Physical Therapy, Integumentary Physical Therapy, Sports Physical Therapy, Gender Health Care Physical Therapy. Physical therapy is a multi-approach treatment which depends on the particular

condition as well as the particular areas. It deals with the physical problems linked to a number of body systems. Some of the common approaches used by physical therapist include movements and exercise, manual therapy techniques, joint mobilizations, electrotherapeutic modalities, stretching's, neurodynamics, etc.

There are certain studies which indicate that physical therapy treatment in particular is not a factor of dissatisfaction among the patients.

This particular study was conducted to develop and test an instrument which can be used to know what are the certain variables which are linked with satisfaction of patients receiving outpatient physical therapy. The items which were linked with the satisfaction of patients included patient therapist relationship. It indicates the adequate time given to the patient, having a strong listening and communication skill with the patient and a clear explanation of treatment plan to the patient. The environmental factors of location, parking areas and equipments had less importance for patient satisfaction.<sup>(6)</sup>

Another study which included different articles related to patient satisfaction indicated that patients get satisfied when they receive patient focused treatment, effective communication and empathy from the therapist, adequate treatment time and well managed care, convenient access and low waiting times.<sup>(7)</sup>

Patient satisfaction is an important area of research because satisfaction level has a direct impact on the health status. This article defines satisfaction level of patients regarding general health care. Thus a theory of patient satisfaction with physiotherapy needs to be developed which could support the concept of satisfaction. Such a theory is important as it would inform about the current performance, its evaluation and would give good suggestions for future patient care.<sup>(8)</sup> Thus an overall review suggests that patient satisfaction should be an important component to gain quality health care. The awareness and





attitudes of patients towards physical therapy needs more exploration and issues related to patients satisfaction with outpatient care also needs further improvement.

### METHODOLOGY:

A cross-sectional study was conducted at different hospitals of Pakistan. A self structured questionnaire which was also translated into Urdu language, was distributed among the patients. Sample size was 248; convenient sampling technique was used for selection of patients. Data was analyzed using SPSS 20.

### RESULTS:

A cross-sectional study was done in different hospitals of Pakistan. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed out of which 248 questionnaires were received back. The results showed that 178 (71.8%) physical therapists welcomed the patients with a smiling face. 39(15.7%) patients were private, 66(26.6 %) entitled patients, 65 (26.2%) panel patients and 78 (31.5%) patients were family members. 102 (41.1%) patients visited for OPD for less than one week, 70 (28.2%) patients visited more than one week. 190 (76.6%) patients took appointment from physical therapist before the visit. 168 (67.7%) waited for their session and 66 (26.6%) patients were given session for more than 40 minutes. 112 (45.2%) responded that they were given complete treatment by physiotherapy technicians and 50 (20.2%) took treatment by physiotherapy assistants. 153 (61.7%) patients gave complete history. 147 (57.7%) patients responded that the treatment was given by the same physiotherapist. 74 (29.8%) physiotherapists personally give treatment session to the patients. 33 (13.3%) technicians, 26 (10.5%) assistants, 115 (46.4%) trainees were giving treatment to patients. Majority of patients 207(83.5%) responded that their session included electrotherapy. 194 (78.2%) were not given manual therapy session and 195 (78.6%) patient did not get any exercise therapy session. Written

home plan was given to 62 (25%) patients and 152 (61.3%) patients were only provided with verbal home plan. 62 (25%) patients did not get any relief, 54 (21.8%) patients got 50% relief after their first session. 51 (20.6%) patients got 50% relief after 10 to 15 sessions and majority 69 (27.8%) of the patients got relief after 5 to 10 sessions.. According to these results 87 (35.1%) patients were satisfied with physiotherapy treatment at government hospitals and 161 (64.9%) patients preferred to visit private hospitals.

**Table No.1 Feedback of Patients.**

	Electrotherapy		Manual therapy		Exercise therapy	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	207	83.5	54	21.8	53	21.4
No	41	16.5	194	78.2	195	78.6

**Table No.2 Hospital Preference**

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Govt. hospitals	87	35.1
Private hospitals	161	64.9

**Table No.3 Satisfaction Level**

	Electrotherapy		Manual therapy		Exercise therapy		Home plan	
	Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age
Satisfaction with Physical Therapy Treatment	59	23.7	54	21.7	44	17.7	72	29

**Table No.4 Sessions for 50% relief**

No. of Sessions for 50% relief	Electrotherapy	Manual therapy	Exercise therapy
1	12.5	10.8	10.8
5-10	25.8	10.8	6.85
10-15	19.3	0	3.62
20	4.83	0	0
Same condition	20.9	0	0

### DISCUSSION:

Based on the results the study concluded that getting physical therapy treatment in government hospitals of Pakistan is not a satisfactory experience for the patients because the attitude of physical therapist towards their patients was not good. There are certain things which are causing problems and increasing the dissatisfaction level among the patients. If these issues are resolved



better treatment can be given and good results can be achieved. Due to decreased number of professionals working in the hospitals most of the patients have to wait for their sessions and this result in excess number of patients in OPDs which makes it difficult for the therapist to manage it. Dissatisfaction regarding quality treatment is also present because most of the time the treatment is given by physical therapy technicians, assistants and trainees. According to the results, seventy nine percent of patients were receiving only electrotherapy treatment which is not a satisfactory protocol for the patient. Patients were not getting any manual therapy and exercise therapy sessions for their problems. This is the reason that the patients are not getting satisfaction after the treatment. Twenty percent patient got relief after ten to fifteen sessions, twenty five percent patients responded that they had no relief. It also showed that quality and evidence based treatment is required to get good results.

There are certain studies which indicated different levels of satisfaction within the patients. The general population needs to have more awareness regarding physical therapy. As the basic and most important purpose of physical therapy is to help patients to regain their independence and to live a meaningful life. Thus the people should be aware of the results they would get after having physical therapy treatment. For this purpose all health care professionals should inform their patients to take good care of themselves and be more responsible towards their health.<sup>(9)</sup> Physical therapy treatment techniques and decision makings need to get refined so that we can ensure it to deliver our best possible results. However, physical therapy is a unique treatment technique and patients come to physical therapy for a high-intensity episode of care lasting weeks or months. Within that time, physical therapy had been an important part of their day-to-day life. Thus in order to deliver our worthy proposition to the patients we need to

provide them support not only on direct patient care but also outside the clinic. Thus we need to look at the patient's need and perception of getting treatment. This would help us to improve our representation in the community as well advance our profession.<sup>(10)</sup>

## CONCLUSION:

The study concluded that majority of the patients were not satisfied by the physical therapy treatment they were receiving at government hospitals and they prefer private clinics for treatment. As government hospitals are having less number of qualified professionals so it makes difficult for the professionals working to manage their time with the patients due to whom patients had to wait for long period and due to less time the treatment given also did not satisfy the patient. Most of the time the treatment is given by the technicians, assistants or trainees because most of the government hospitals are working without qualified professionals.

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