ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Volume-7 | Issue-2 | February-2018 | PRINT ISSN No 2277 - 8179

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN PHYSIOTHERAPY STUDENTS

Physiotherapy

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ABSTRACT

Physiotherapy, more than any other science, is strongly connected with physical well-being. Therefore, the objective of this research is to study the knowledge, attitude and physical activity in physiotherapy students. A cross-sectional survey was conducted using a self-designed questionnaire amongst 100 (convenient sampling) male and female final year physiotherapy students in the age group of 20-22 years from SBB College of Physiotherapy, Ahmedabad. The data was analyzed using PSPP-V.0.8.1.

From the analysis of this sample it was found that the knowledge regarding physical fitness was fairly low, the attitude towards being active was unfavourable and very few students practiced physical activity regularly. The study illustrates the sedentary lifestyle in students and necessitates the inclusion of physical activity, so as to create more integrity in physiotherapists, and to provide an enabling environment to promote physical activity so that it can be inculcated in patients too.

KEYWORDS

Physiotherapy Students-Knowledge-Attitude–Practice-Physical activity

Introduction:

Physical activity, as defined by WHO, is any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Physical inactivity has been identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality causing approximately 6% of deaths globally (2017, December 01). Retrieved from http:// www.who.int/topics/physical_activity/en/. That physical activity is important in our lives and affects our wellbeing, is a cliched understatement.

Regular physical activity has a positive effect on physical, mental, and social aspects of individual and community health (Ramezankhani et al., 2013). It is also associated with a better quality of life and improved health outcomes (Penedo et al., 2005). There are innumerable benefits of being physically active, a few of which are a developed muscular and cardiovascular endurance, an improvement in bone and functional health, reduction in the risk of hypertension, coronary artery disease, diabetes, etc (2017, December 01). Retrieved from http:// www. who. int/ mediacentre/factsheets/fs385/en/. Physical inactivity can double the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, as well as obesity (Ziari et al., 2017). In fact, an article by Warburton DER et al states that physical inactivity is a modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular disease and a widening variety of other chronic diseases, including diabetes mellitus, cancer (colon and breast), obesity, hypertension, bone and joint diseases (osteoporosis and osteoarthritis), and depression (Warburton et al., 2006). Physical inactivity is a serious problem in our society today, and is one of the chief causes of various health related issues in all individuals.

Building a healthy relationship with exercise for personal wellness is important for every individual, especially college students who find themselves living today in a dynamic world filled with stress, sedentary lifestyles, and negative media-induced body image ideals. There is strong scientific evidence to show how being physically active can help lead a healthier and even happier life (Hosseinzadeh et al., 2015). The article by Kazem et al also goes on to state that physical activity can also boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reduces stress, depression and dementia.

It would be appropriate to state then that Physiotherapy, more than any other science, is strongly connected with physical well-being. The need for awareness, fitness-attitude and physical exercise are of primary importance both in and for the students studying Physiotherapy. If young and emerging physiotherapists can become aware of their attitudes and habits now, they can jumpstart to a lifetime of wellness and health in their future. This study therefore engages in analysing the knowledge, attitude and practice of physical activity among Physiotherapy students.

Aim:

The aim of this study is to observe and analyse the knowledge, attitude and practice of physical activity in physiotherapy students

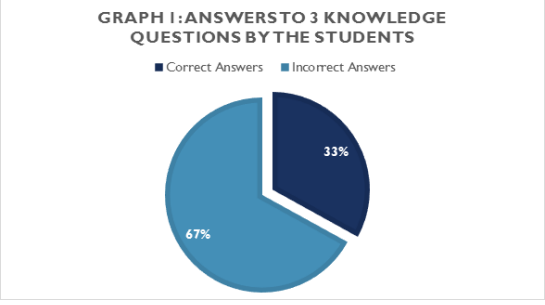
Method:

An observational cross-sectional survey was conducted amongst the physiotherapy students of SBB College of Physiotherapy, Ahmedabad. Both male and female final year students and interns in the age group of 20-22 years were included. The questionnaire was self -designed based on previous studies (IPAQ, October 2002), (IPAQ, August 2002), (RAPA, 2006) . Two senior faculty in the physiotherapy college were asked to give their suggestions related to the questionnaire and necessary changes were made. The questionnaire was then self-administered, to collect the data from a convenience sample of 100 subjects. The data were coded and analysed using PSPP-V.0.8.1.

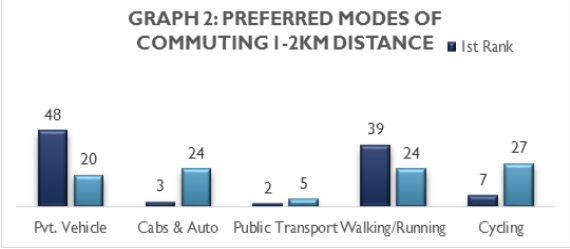
Results:

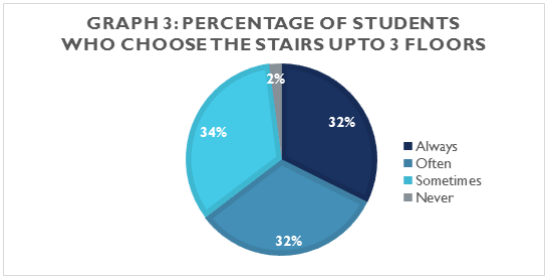
The answers were categorized into those giving information about knowledge, attitude and perception regarding physical activity.

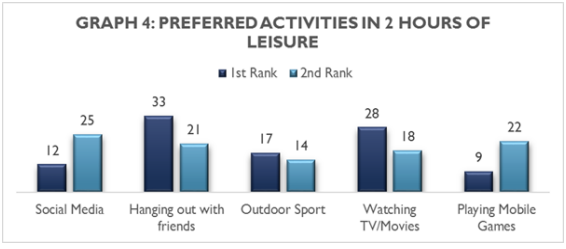
Knowledge: Out of 3 questions regarding the knowledge of basic physical activity in the physiotherapy students, 67% students could not answer all correctly, as shown in Graph 1, and 66% students could name 4 different types of physical activities.



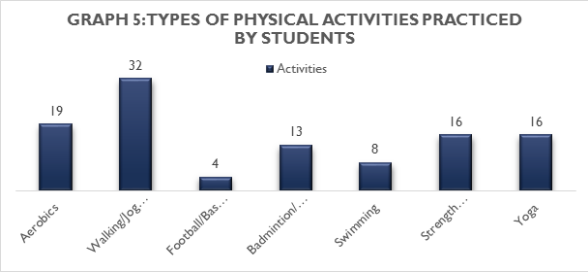
Attitude: 62% students prefer to use private vehicles to travel upto short distances of 1-2km instead of walking/cycling, as shown in graph 2. 66% students did not always prefer to use the stairs even up to 3 floors, as shown in graph 3. Only 31% would like to spend two hours of leisure in outdoor sports.







Practice: Most subjects engaged in moderate-minimum physical activities routinely. 31% subjects did a workout regularly apart from their routine activity. Walking was the most practiced exercise among those who work-out regularly, as shown in graph 5.



Discussion:

A total of 100 students were surveyed in this study. Out of 3 knowledge questions regarding fitness and physical activity, 67% of the students could not answer all correctly. Of them, 66% students could name 4 physical activities correctly, which shows their familiarity with different types of exercise. Also, 45% students strongly agree, and 53% students agree that physical and mental well-being are dependent on physical activities. This also shows that the students are aware of the benefits of being physically fit. The results given above are consistent with the fact that knowledge about physical activity was fairly low among the students.

The attitude of the students towards physical activity was poor. Among 100 students, 62 students preferred to use private vehicles for short distances of 1-2km instead of walking/cycling. 66% students did not always prefer to use the stairs even up to 3 floors. Only 31% would like to spend two hours of leisure in outdoor sports. For adults aged 18–64 years, the WHO recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity throughout the week, or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity throughout the week, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity (2017, December 01). Retrieved from http:// www.who.int/ ncds/ prevention/physical-activity/global recommendations-for-health/en/. The average time spent on exercises and physical activities by students is approximately 53 minutes throughout the week at moderate intensity, which is inadequate according to the guidelines given by WHO. The results above show a great deal of disregard by the students towards being active and fit in their routine activities.

In practice, most subjects engaged only in moderate-minimum physical activities routinely, which includes their daily activities at home and at clinic/college. Apart from their routine activities, only 31% students work out regularly in the form of walking, jogging, aerobics, sports, strength training and yoga. 80% students believe they do not exercise as much as they require. The above data shows that even though the students are aware of their inactivity, very few have actually inculcated physical activity in their lifestyle. Most students attributed their sedentary life to hectic routine and tiredness. A research by Anand T et al found consistent results with the present study in which the knowledge and practice was found to be low amongst medical students (Anand et al., 2011).

A research by Amudha S Poobalan et al also found similar results in 18-25 year old adolescents regarding their practice of physical activity. However, they found a positive attitude of the adolescents towards physical activity opposing with the negative attitude of the students in this study. Only 28% of adolescents achieved recommended levels of physical activity in their study even though they had a positive attitude and strong intentions to do so (Poobalan et al., 2012). A similar study conducted on Nursing and Midwifery students had contrasting results regarding the knowledge, attitude and practice of physical activity. They exhibited a high level of knowledge and attitude regarding physical fitness among subjects. The amount of activity was the only differing factor in majority of students (Hosseinzadeh et al., 2017).

Conclusion:

Knowledge regarding physical fitness was fairly low, the attitude towards being active was unfavourable and very few students practiced physical activity regularly. The study illustrates the inactivity and sedentary lifestyle in students and necessitates the inclusion of physical activity in one's life, and to provide an enabling environment for promoting physical activity so it can be inculcated in patients as well.

To conclude, this study hopes to fill the lacunae between theory and practice, between commanding fitness and being fit, between aiding physical fitness in others and activating it within oneself, and thus create more integrity in Physiotherapists.

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