



A SURVEY OF KNOWLEDGE OF PALLIATIVE CARE AMONG PHYSIOTHERAPY STUDENTS OF KAMRUP METRO

Oncology

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ABSTRACT

Background: Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients with life threatening illness and their families through the prevention and relief of suffering and early identification and treatment of pain and other various problems. Physiotherapy play an important role in the multidisciplinary palliative care team. **Aims & Objective:** To survey the extent of knowledge and practical application among physiotherapy students of Guwahati Metro. **Materials & Method:** 217 students of physiotherapy from BPT 4th year, MPT 1st and 2nd year was taken. An offline questionnaire was circulated among them & collected for evaluation. **Statistical Analysis:** Based on the study, below 50% students agreed the necessity of palliative care knowledge in Physiotherapy education, but majority of them (44%) were not confident about the importance of palliative care as curative care in Physiotherapy practice. 50% students were not sure about the clinical experience of palliative physiotherapy care. The support for physiotherapy care in clinical field is also found to be strongly disagreed by 31% of students. The study shows the support for physiotherapy in palliative care in the society is also found to be not sure (33%) **Results :** Based on the study, the knowledge of palliative care was found to be less among physiotherapy students of Kamrup Metro. **Conclusion:** As the knowledge and clinical experiences of palliative care were found to be not satisfactory, it is necessary to include some more hours of palliative care study, clinical postings, workshops in Physiotherapy Education.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

Palliative care is an approach that improves quality of life of patients with life threatening illness and their families through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification, impeccable assessment and treatment of pain & other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual. (World Health Organization).^[1]

As the definition implies that palliative care concerns about various problems suffered by a patient fighting with life threatening illness. It not only covers symptomatic treatment but also covers emotional, social, economic, spiritual aspects, dignified death and healing, bereavement support. To serve all these aspects, different people from different professions should be involved in Palliative team like Physician, Nurses, Physiotherapists, Care taker, Counsellor, Priests, influencer, fund raiser, social worker etc. All those interested in palliative care profession, specially the healthcare professionals should have sound knowledge and concept on Palliative Care.

Physiotherapists assess plan, and implement rehabilitative programs that improve or restore human motor functions, maximize movement ability, relief pain syndromes and treat or prevent physical challenges associated with injuries, diseases and other impairments.

Various physiotherapy treatment techniques used in palliative care which aims to reduce pain, fatigue, enables independence & provide relief from distressing symptoms hence offers support to the patient, in simple words helps in improvement of quality of life.

Physiotherapists have a great value and role in palliative team. So sufficient education, training, influences and participation should be included in physiotherapy courses. The Aim of this study was to survey the extent of knowledge of palliative care among Physiotherapy students in Kamrup Metro.^{[3][4]}

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is approved by the Ethical Committee of State Cancer Institute, Gauhati Medical College and Hospital.

Study Design: Cross-sectional study.

Sample Size: 217

Inclusion Criteria: BPT final year & MPT 1st & 2nd year students of physiotherapy colleges of Guwahati Metro.

Exclusion Criteria: BPT 1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year students were excluded.

METHODOLOGY

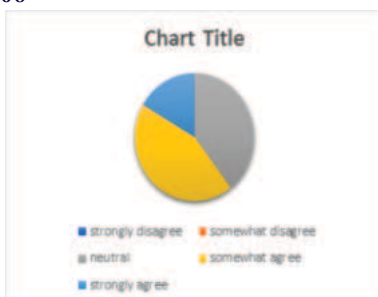
A detailed explanation about the study was given to the final year and masters degree students and thereafter 500 questionnaires in which PTiPC-KABE scale (The Physical Therapy in Palliative care – Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs & Experience Scale) was used and were distributed out of which 217 questionnaires were returned.

Analysis -

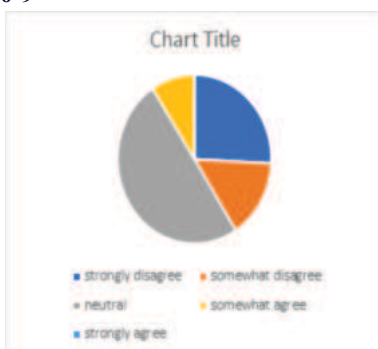
	Strong-ly disagree (%)	Some-what disagree (%)	Neutral (not sure) (%)	Some-what agree (%)	Strong-ly agree (%)
8. Palliative care is as important as curative care in physiotherapy practice	0	0	40%	44%	16%
9. I have had experience of providing palliative care to dying patients and their families	26%	15%	50%	9%	0
11. There is support for physiotherapy in palliative care in the society	24%	0	33%	20%	23%
12. The medical staffs support physiotherapy in palliative care in my unit	31%	24%	18%	12%	15%
19. Palliative care is necessary in physiotherapy education	0	17%	5%	35%	44%

Based on the table provided, responses to questions regarding palliative care in physiotherapy show varied opinions among participants. A significant proportion (44%) agreed that palliative care is as important as curative care, while 40% remained neutral and 16% strongly agreed. When asked about personal experience in providing palliative care, half of the respondents (50%) were neutral, 26% strongly disagreed, and 15% somewhat disagreed, indicating limited hands-on experience. Regarding institutional support for physiotherapy in palliative care, 33% remained neutral, 24% strongly disagreed, and 23% strongly agreed. Responses about medical staff support were more divided, with 31% strongly disagreeing and only 15% strongly agreeing. Notably, there was strong consensus on the importance of including palliative care in physiotherapy education, with 44% strongly agreeing and 35% somewhat agreeing. This highlights a clear recognition of the educational value, even as practical and institutional support varies.

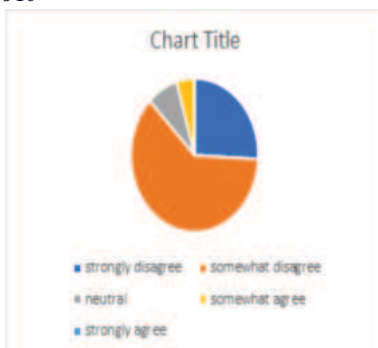
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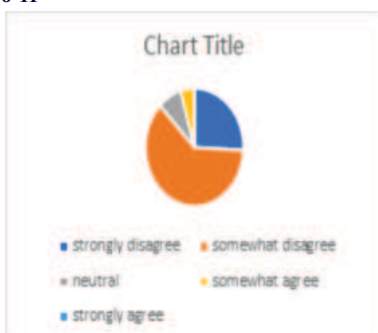
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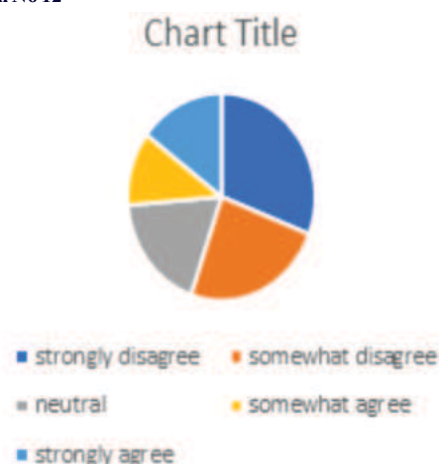
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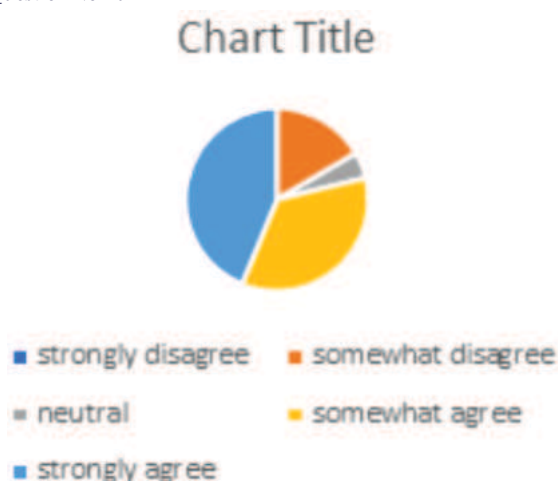
Question No-11



Question No 12



Question No-19



Pic: Pie Chart Representation Of Question 8,9,10,11,12,19.

QUESTIONNAIRE BASED ON PHYSICAL THERAPY IN PALLIATIVE CARE-KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND EXPERIENCE SCALE (PTIPC-KABE scale)

Please take your valuable time and fill this questionnaire.

The first seven questions are on your personal information (which will never be revealed) and the questions that follow assess your current level of knowledge and your perceived attitudes to palliative care as a physiotherapist. In case of any unseen circumstances, please provide your most suitable answer for your response to as if the situation really occurred in your presence. Kindly select only one option out of five for each of the items (8-26). Many thanks for filling this questionnaire.

- 1.Name: _____ 2.Age: _____
- 3.Gender: _____ 4.Occupation: _____
- 5.Contact address: _____
- E-mail id: _____
- Phone: _____

6.Please state your overall interest towards "palliative care"



7.Which of the following descriptions (please tick only one) best suit your current position?

- ☐ Undergraduate (BPT) student
- ☐ Physiotherapy intern
- ☐ Practising physiotherapist
- ☐ Post-graduates (MPT) student
- ☐ Teaching physiotherapist-Tutor, Asst Lecturer, Assoc professor, Professor
- ☐ Physiotherapy researcher
- ☐ Doctoral (PhD) student
- ☐ Physiotherapy department head/institution head

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral (not sure)	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
8.Palliative care is as important as curative care in physiotherapy practice					
9.I have had experience of providing palliative care to dying patients and their families					
10.I feel a sense of personal failure when a patient dies					
11.There is support for physiotherapy in palliative care in the society					
12.The medical staffs support physiotherapy in palliative care in my unit					
13.The physical environment of my unit is ideal for providing palliative care to dying patients					
14.My unit is adequately staffed for providing the needs of dying patients requiring palliative care and their families					
15.In my unit, parents/relatives are involved in decisions about their dying patients					
16.My previous experience of providing care to dying patients have been rewarding					
17.When patients are dying in my unit, providing pain relief is a priority for me					
18.I am often exposed to death in the physiotherapy department					
19.Palliative care is necessary in physiotherapy education					
20.When a patient dies in my unit, I have sufficient time to spend with the family					
21.There are policies or guidelines to assist in the delivery of palliative care in my unit					
22.In my unit, when a diagnosis with a likely poor outcome is made, parents/relatives are informed of palliative care options					
23.In my unit the team expresses its opinions, values and beliefs about providing care to dying patients					
24.Caring of dying patients is traumatic for me					
25.I have received education that assists me to support and communicate with parents /relatives of dying patients					
26.All members of the healthcare team in my unit agree with and support palliative care when it is implemented for a dying patient					
27. My personal attitudes about death affects my willingness to deliver palliative care					
28. Palliative care is against the values of physiotherapy					
29.When a patient dies in my unit, counselling is available if I need it					
30. There is a belief in society that patient should not die , under any circumstances					
31.Curative care is more important than palliative care in the physiotherapy practice environment					
32. What do you mean by the term palliative care					
33.List down any five disease conditions which require “palliative care”					
a.					
b.					
c.					
d.					
e.					
34. Which one of the following is the most important emphasis of “palliative care”?					
a.Mobility, functional independence, quality of life					
b.Structural alignment, musculoskeletal endurance, quality of life.					
c.Mobility, cardiorespiratory endurance, quality of life					
d.Functional independence, structural alignment, cardiorespiratory endurance.					
35. State TRUE or FALSE for the following statement					
a. Palliative care provides relief from pain and other distressing syndromes					
b. Palliative care considers life and regards dying as a complicated process					

DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that less than 50% of the students agreed that palliative care is as important as curative care but they are not confident. Only 16% students were found confident. Regarding personal experiences of providing palliative care to the patient and families ,50 % students were found not sure about it. According to study , there is lack of sufficient staff of physiotherapist in palliative team is marked(31%). But majority of the students agreed (44%) the importance of palliative care knowledge in Physiotherapy courses.

The goal of our study was to find out the extent of knowledge, interest and application of palliative care among physiotherapy students. As palliative care is a broad concept involving many people from different professions , physiotherapists have a huge role in improvement of Quality of life by their treatment modalities and exercises. Therefore, it is important to know the extent of knowledge they have and how much they are learning to improve the quality of palliative care. Our survey is the first of kind reported on physiotherapist in palliative care in Guwahati Metro.

Through this study, the knowledge of palliative care does not seem to be satisfactory among the physiotherapy students of Guwahati metro in relation to concept based questions . Application of palliative care in day to day practice is also very less. They are not seemed well trained on dying patient handling , communication and bereavement support.

Our study is not free from limitations. Firstly, the sample size was less. Secondly, this study was conducted in Guwahati Metro, therefore

further studies can be conducted in other parts of Assam and North-Eastern India among students and practicing physiotherapists.

CONCLUSION

Based on this study , it can be concluded that nearly below fifty percent of the students have limited knowledge, awareness and clinical experience in managing palliative patients . In order to improve these aspects, inclusion of palliative care concepts in physiotherapy curriculum, palliative care postings for physiotherapy students and organizing various workshops integrating palliative care and physiotherapy can be done.

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