



ATTITUDE OF YOUNG PHYSICAL THERAPISTS TOWARDS PHYSICALLY DISABLED PERSONS

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Abstract

Disabled people require more medical attention. Attitudes towards people with disability can impact their healthcare in order for disabled individuals to receive proper physical therapy treatment it is essential that the physical therapists have a positive and supporting attitude towards them.

Objective: To assess the attitude of physiotherapists towards disable persons.

Study Design: Observational Study.

Place and Duration: This study was conducted in different areas of Province Of Punjab (Sargodha, Lahore, and Gujranwala) from May 2018 to January 2019.

Materials and Methods: This observational study recruited 300 physiotherapists from different areas of Province Of Punjab, living in Sargodha, Lahore, and Gujranwala. The inclusive criteria were final year students and young physiotherapists in government and private sector of age group between 20 to 35 years. The attitude towards disability is checked by form O questionnaire. The questionnaire includes closed ended questions. SPSS was used to carry out the data analysis.

Results: 70.7% females and 29.3% males were involved in research, working physiotherapists had highest percentage with 51.7% and students had 48.3%. The questionnaire showed that young physiotherapist had positive behaviour towards disabled children.

Conclusion: From the results of the study, it is concluded that young physiotherapists show a more positive attitude towards disable persons.

Introduction

World Health Organization (WHO) defines disabilities as “an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions.” [1]. Approximately 15% of the world’s population are estimated to live with some sort of disability. Disabled people require more medical attention; however, people with disabilities have restricted access to healthcare and face unsatisfied healthcare needs. Almost 50% of people with disabilities are unable to spare the price of medical care. There are two models of disability: the medical and the social model. Both models show that disability results in exclusion of the disabled people from major domains of social life which manifests itself as not only deliberate segregation, but in an organized social setting will restrict their participation [2].

According to research done by Hergenrather and Rhodes (2007), Chubon (1982) and Offergeld (2012) in the past four decades, suggest that attitudes towards people with disabilities were pessimistic and greatly contribute on the success or failure of individuals with disabilities as they pursue their opportunity to work, live independently and partake in community life [3].

According to Finklestein disability is a paradox which includes the disabled person and the limitations forced upon them by the society. He gave a three phase model which shows how the paradox made an appearance during the industrialization [1]. Attitudes towards people with disability can impact their healthcare [8]. Attitudes of healthcare professionals are important elements in the rehabilitation and self-acceptance of people with disabilities.[4] Research has shown that such attitudes can have a detrimental effect on patients presenting with stigmatized medical conditions and can even flow on to impact their family [9] .

Pessimistic healthcare provider attitudes toward patients with physical disabilities may challenge the delivery of quality of care to the patients [11]. Some of the factors associated with providers' attitudes toward patients with physical disabilities are potentially modifiable (e.g., experience) and could be the target of educational interventions to ameliorate this fear and facilitate higher quality care [11]. Disabled people suffer from rejection, exclusion and discrimination. The undergraduate education of future health professionals should include processes of critical thinking towards and analysis of the disabled [13] .

In order for disabled individuals to receive proper physical therapy treatment it is essential that the physical therapists have a supporting attitude towards them. The General Medical Council Education Committee's 1991 discussion document on the undergraduate curriculum has specially mentioned that there is a need for improved communication between medical schools to facilitate the spread of educational activities on this topic [16].

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitude of physical therapists and undergraduate physical therapy students towards people with disability. Results also highlighted the role of educators, health professionals, counsellors and work practice employers to design programs that will improve the attitude of students toward people with disabilities.

Methodology

This was the observational study in which attitude towards disability was checked by form O questionnaire. The questionnaire included closed ended questions. The material was gathered from 300 physiotherapists from different areas of province of Punjab, living in Sargodha, Lahore, and Gujranwala that mostly included young physiotherapists of age groups between 20 to 35 years.

Sample size

Study was conducted on 300 individuals, including Final year students and young physiotherapists.

Assortment criteria

INCLUSION CRITERIA

1. Study was conducted on young physiotherapists of age 20 to 35 years.
2. Physiotherapists working in government and private sector.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

1. Therapists below age 20 and above age 35 were excluded.
2. Health professionals other than physiotherapists.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed through SPSS (Statistical packages for social sciences). Study was conducted in different areas of Punjab, including Sargodha, Lahore and Gujranwala.

GENDER

In our study, 70.7% respondents were female while 29.3% responses were from male.

WORK STATUS

In our study, 51.7% data were obtained from working physiotherapists while 48.3% from students.

1: Parents of children with disabilities should be less strict than other parents.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	_3	3	1.0	1.0	1.0
	_2	4	1.3	1.3	2.3
	_1	10	3.3	3.3	5.7
	+1	36	12.0	12.0	17.7
	+2	102	34.0	34.0	51.7
	+3	145	48.3	48.3	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

According to our study, 48.3% strongly agreed with statement that parents of disabled children should be less strict followed by 34% of those who agreed pretty much with the statement and only 1% are in favour that parents should be strict if their child is disabled.

2. Persons with physical disabilities are just as intelligent as non-disabled ones.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	_3	5	1.7	1.7	1.7
	_2	12	4.0	4.0	5.7
	_1	29	9.7	9.7	15.3
	+1	54	18.0	18.0	33.3
	+2	109	36.3	36.3	69.7
	+3	91	30.3	30.3	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	
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According to our study, 36.3% agreed pretty much that disabled persons are as intelligent as normal individuals followed by those (30.3%) who strongly agreed with the statement and only 1 % strongly disagree with the statement.

3. People with disabilities are usually easier to get along with than other people.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	_3	16	5.3	5.4	5.4
	_2	41	13.7	13.7	19.1
	_1	61	20.3	20.4	39.5
	+1	90	30.0	30.1	69.6
	+2	66	22.0	22.1	91.6
	+3	25	8.3	8.4	100.0
	Total	299	99.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.3		
Total		300	100.0		

According to our study,30% are little agreed with the statement that disabled people are easier to get along with, followed by 22% of those who agreed strongly with the statement while only 5% strongly disagree.

4. Most people with disabilities feel sorry for themselves.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
_3	16	5.3	5.3	5.3
_2	9	3.0	3.0	8.3
_1	25	8.3	8.3	16.7
Valid +1	76	25.3	25.3	42.0
+2	107	35.7	35.7	77.7
+3	67	22.3	22.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

According to our study, 35.7% disabled person felt sorry for themselves followed by 25.3% who agree a little with the statement and only 3% disagreed pretty much with the statement.

5. People with disabilities are often the same as anyone else.

According to our study, 23.3% agree pretty much that disabled individuals are same as normal people followed by 22.7% who agree a little with the statement and only 8% disagree pretty much with the statement.

6. There should not be special schools for children with disabilities.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
_3	129	43.0	43.0	43.0
_2	35	11.7	11.7	54.7
_1	35	11.7	11.7	66.3
Valid +1	23	7.7	7.7	74.0
+2	33	11.0	11.0	85.0
+3	45	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

According to our study, 43% strongly disagreed with that there should be no special schools for disabled children followed by 15% who agreed strongly with the statement while only 7% agreed a little with the statement.

7. It would be best for persons with disabilities to live and work in special communities.

According to our study, 34% strongly agreed that disabled individuals should live and work in special communities followed by 26.7% who agreed pretty much while only 3.7% disagreed pretty much with the statement.

8. It is up to the government to take care of persons with disabilities.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
_3	7	2.3	2.3	2.3
_2	9	3.0	3.0	5.3
_1	20	6.7	6.7	12.0
Valid +1	56	18.7	18.7	30.7
+2	82	27.3	27.3	58.0
+3	126	42.0	42.0	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

According to our study, 42% strongly agreed that government should take care of disabled persons followed by 27.3% those who agreed pretty much with statement while only 2.3% strongly disagreed with statement.

9. Most people with disabilities worry a great deal.

According to our study, 31% agreed pretty much with that disabled persons worry a great deal followed by 30% of those who strongly agreed with statement and only 1.3% strongly disagreed with statement.

10. People with disabilities should not be expected to meet the same standards as people without disabilities.

According to our study, 20.3% agreed pretty much that disabled people aren't expected to meet the same standards as of normal people followed by 19.7% who strongly agreed with the statement while only 10.3% disagreed pretty much with statement.

11. People with disabilities are as happy as people without disabilities.

According to our study, 22.7% agreed a little that disabled people are as happy as normal individuals followed by 22.3% agreed pretty much with the statement and only 9.7% strongly disagreed.

12. People with severe disabilities are no harder to get along with than those with minor disabilities.

According to our study, 28.7% agreed a little that severely disabled individuals are not hard to get along as compared to minor disabled individuals followed by 20.3% who agreed pretty much with the statement while only 9.3% strongly disagreed.

13. It is almost impossible for a person with a disability to lead a normal life.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
_3	52	17.3	17.3	17.3
_2	55	18.3	18.3	35.7
_1	54	18.0	18.0	53.7
Valid +1	56	18.7	18.7	72.3
+2	59	19.7	19.7	92.0
+3	24	8.0	8.0	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

According to our study, 19.7% agreed pretty much with that it is almost impossible for disabled individuals to lead a normal life followed by 18.7% agreeing a little with statement and only 8% strongly agreed.

14. You should not expect too much from people with disabilities.

According to our study, 27% agreed a little that one should not expect much from people with disabilities followed by 26.3% those who agreed pretty much while only 8.7% strongly agreed with the statement.

15. People with disabilities tend to keep to themselves much of the time.

According to our study, 39.7% agreed a little that people with disabilities tend to keep to themselves much of time followed by 27.7% those who agreed pretty much while only 2.3% disagreed strongly with the statement.

16. People with disabilities are more easily upset than people without disabilities.

According to our study, 34.3% are agreed pretty much with the statement that disabled person get easily upset than normal individuals followed by 24.7% those agreed strongly with statement while only 4% strongly disagreed.

17. People with disabilities cannot have a normal social life.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
-3	38	12.7	12.7	12.7
-2	44	14.7	14.7	27.3
-1	36	12.0	12.0	39.3
Valid +1	76	25.3	25.3	64.7
+2	68	22.7	22.7	87.3
+3	38	12.7	12.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

According to our study, 25.3% agreed a little with that people with disabilities cannot have normal life followed by 22.7% with those who agree pretty much while only 12% disagreed a little with the statement.

18. Most people with disabilities feel that they are not as good as other people.

According to our study, 31.3% agree pretty much that disabled individuals thought themselves as they are not as good as other people followed by 30.3% those who agreed a little and only 6% disagreed pretty much with the statement.

19. You have to be careful what you say when you are with people with disabilities.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
-3	5	1.7	1.7	1.7
-2	9	3.0	3.0	4.7
-1	25	8.3	8.3	13.0
Valid +1	55	18.3	18.3	31.3
+2	91	30.3	30.3	61.7
+3	115	38.3	38.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

According to our studies, 38.3% strongly agree that one should be careful while talking with disabled persons followed by 30.3% those who agree pretty much while only 1.7% strongly disagree with the statement.

20. People with disabilities are often grouchy.

According to our study, 34% agreed a little with that disabled people are often grouchy followed by 25.3% with those who agreed pretty much with the statement while only 5% strongly disagreed with the statement.

T-TEST

Group Statistics

Work status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
APD working physiotherapist	152	63.2105	9.76657	.79217
total Student	144	63.7153	12.02251	1.00188

Discussion

It is considered that around millions of children in the world live with a disability [25] and most often, these children do not receive necessary treatment and most of them are discriminated badly.

Study conducted by Nora Shields and Nicholas F. Taylor, showed that after 8 weeks of training the physiotherapy students, the students manifested more positive attitude towards the people with disabilities. This study assists our study's results where working physiotherapists showed more

positive results than the ones who are not working yet [20]. Our study, unlike any previous study, assessed the behaviour of parents of disabled children through a physiotherapist's eyes. Out of 300 physiotherapists, 48% noticed that parents are less strict with their disabled child. Only 1% disagreed, and the rest agreed as well. Majority of the parents have better understanding of the fact that children with disabilities need to be treated and brought up in a lenient and flexible environment. This study can help in detecting the lack of support and in improving the parents' behaviour towards their children with disabilities by counselling them and spreading awareness about the impact of their behaviour disabled children.

In past, a study in Bhutan based on the data collected physicians and nurses of 3 major hospitals showed mean negative attitude towards people with disabilities [24]. Contrary, our study has shown tremendously positive results as compared to other studies.

This contrast depicts the level of awareness and realization of responsibility of our young physiotherapists towards people with disabilities. It also shows the education standard of our institutes and how they are schooling their student about their professional attitude.

In contrast with previous studies, our study did not show significant difference between the attitude of male and female physiotherapists towards people with disabilities. The mean score of both genders was positive. This demonstrates that gender of physiotherapist has a little influence on attitude towards disabled people.

Our study showed that majority of the physiotherapists strongly agreed that people with disabilities worry a great deal and they might be dealing with mental health issues. A Korean study reaffirmed that disability is the risk factor of depression and other mental health problems. Furthermore, female disability group showed more depressive symptoms than male disability group [27].

Our study showed positive results about the intelligence and thinking ability of people with disabilities, as only 1% disagreed to that. This can help other people see the people with disability in better ways and a new light. It also nullifies the negative stereotypes about the people with disability. We also assessed that most of the physiotherapists suggest that special schools for disabled children, and more work communities for disabled adults. The positive attitude of physiotherapists in this study can be used to encourage people without disability, who have no contact or experience with disability, to treat a person with disability in a kind, and accepting manner. For improvement in attitude these issues should be discussed between health care professionals, people with disabilities and their families.

Conclusion

According to our study and statistical analysis people who have experience and deal with disabled person have more serious attitude. According to our study majority agreed on following; disabled people often get agitated easily, parents of disabled child should be less strict, there should be separate school for disabled, there is same intellectual level of norms and disabled person, government should take responsibility of disabled, and lastly normal and disabled should not have same standards.

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