



CODEN [USA]: IAJPBB

ISSN: 2349-7750

INDO AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES

<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3334200>
Available online at: <http://www.iajps.com>

Research Article

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF PHYSICAL THERAPY IN PAKISTAN

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Article Received: May 2019

Accepted: June 2019

Published: July 2019

Abstract:

Introduction: The main purpose of this study is to create awareness and educate about the importance of continuous professional development and it is first time ever conducted among undergraduates of physical therapy in Pakistan. Our survey was administrated specifically to evaluate the learning approach among undergraduates for updating their knowledge and to improve clinical skills

Objective: To assess the level of awareness and need of continuous professional development (CPD) among undergraduates of physical therapy in Pakistan.

Methods: Total one hundred and eighty students of Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) were participated in this cross sectional survey. A self-administered Questionnaire was filled in by students to identify the level of awareness of CPD. This was a self-administered questionnaire and questions were asked under the headings of five major categories including learning opportunities, motives, activities, learning style and learning environment of CPD. Scoring instructions were given by the use of 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree (SA-SD).

Result: Of the 250 questionnaires, properly filled were 180 with response rate of 72%. Most of the undergraduates expressed their learning opportunities as that physiotherapy techniques should be practiced under supervision of professionals and moral values should be an integral part of teaching considered in category of CPD motives. Many undergraduates also agreed that CPD activities should be arranged on weekend in small groups and for this preferable learning environment should be didactic.

Conclusions: CPD activities should be arranged on weekends in small groups. The didactic method should be used and focus should be placed on moral values. Physiotherapy techniques should be supervised by professionals.

Keywords: continues professional development, physiotherapy, undergraduates.

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Please cite this article in press Sana Akram et al., Continuous Professional Development among Undergraduate Students of Physical Therapy in Pakistan., Indo Am. J. P. Sci, 2019; 06(07).

INTRODUCTION:

Continuous Professional Development is a long term process of acquiring knowledge through which physiotherapist deals with professional lives that retain, establish and promote awareness and expertise to enhance their abilities at work. It is itself a learning approach in which anyone can take its preliminary actions to fulfill their learning requirements. This process is continuous in Which analysis, accomplishment and reappraisal are included and the basic requirement of this process is to rely on distinguish result of learning.(1)

The areas which are included in CPD regarding the field of Physiotherapy are personal as well as professional development and both are started at the level of undergraduates. Similarly, Sadler-Smith et al recognized three actions of CPD. The sustenance part promotes the idea of long lasting learning, the continuance part demands professionals to exhibit advancing ability, and the mobility part intends to boost up serviceability.(3)

CPD is the fundamental outlook of the physiotherapy profession to carry on current knowledge with enduring establishment in knowledge of the presumption and training of physiotherapy (2). Various changes have been arrived in physiotherapy profession as a consequent of CPD including betterment of expertise and courage. Collectively these changes appear to improve the communicating skills and disciplinary cooperation by authentic judgment and enhancing skills through evidence (7).

The overarching aim of this article is to assess the awareness as well as the need of continuous professional development among undergraduates of DPT.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

A descriptive nature of study design was used. A cross sectional survey was disseminated through a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed in Allama Iqbal Medical College, Lahore (AIMC), Riphah College of Rehabilitation Sciences, Lahore (RCRS), University of Management and Technology, Lahore (UMT), University of Sargodha, Lahore (UOS) , University of Lahore, Lahore (UOL) and University of South Asia, Lahore (USA) of their department of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Sciences

among the undergraduates of Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) which was the target population of this study and excluded all students of other professions as well as post graduates. Undergraduates were participated voluntarily in this survey as questionnaire was disseminated by a person who was not the part of research and there was no direct contact of researchers with

Undergraduates. Students were requested to fill in the questionnaires and gave them back. Consent was assumed as participated students gave back these questionnaires. These questionnaires were submitted to the researchers by the person who administered these questionnaires among undergraduates. After the collection of data from questionnaires, it was inputted into spreadsheet and analyzed by using SPSS version 21. A descriptive statistics was used to identify the characteristics of demographics of participants. Percent and frequencies were used to demonstrate the data and chi-square test was used to express the comparison.

RESULTS:

There were total 180 out of 250 questionnaires were returned. Table 1 is showing the demographic data of this research. All the undergraduates took their part freely with minimum age 17 and maximum age 25 and mean age was 21.44 ± 1.63 . Of these, participants were strongly agreed that physiotherapy techniques should be practiced under supervision of professionals (60%) and they also agreed that moral values should be taught during CPD activities (61.7%). Some were agreed on CPD events that should be arranged on weekend (44.4%). Participants felt that didactic method of learning should be used in workshops (62.8%) and being a student workshop should be preferred in small groups (64.4). Table 3 is showing results compilation.

Table-1 Demographic data about the target population

n (180)		Percentage%
Male	23	12.8%
Female	157	87.2%

Table-2 Institutes

Institute Name:	Number of students participated	Percentage %
AIMC	9	5%
%USA	4	2.2%
RCRS	712	39.6%
UMT	43	23.9%
UOL	43	23.9%
UOS	9	5%

AIMC: Allama Iqbal Medical College

USA: University of South Asia

RCRS: Ripha College of Rehabilitation Sciences

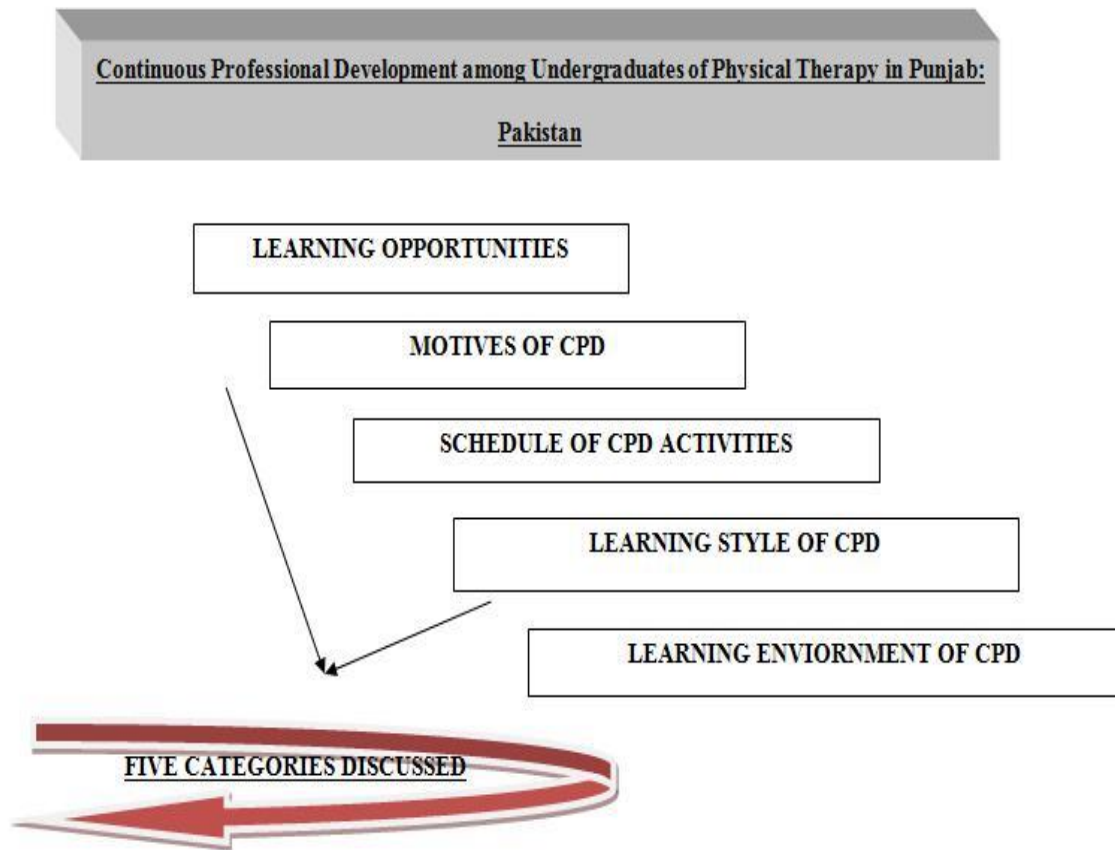
UMT: University of Management and Technology

UOL: University of Lahore

UOS: University of Sargodha

Table-3 Results

Categories of CPD	Prioritized Activities	Percentage%
Learning opportunities	Physiotherapy techniques under supervision of Professional.	60%
Motives	Moral values should be taught	61.7%
Schedule	Arranged on non working days of Week.	44.4%
Learning style	Didactic method of learning	62.8%
Learning environment	Preferred in small groups	64.4%

Figure 1 : Flow chart showing categories on which research based

DISCUSSION:

This study which is conducted among undergraduates, providing the best source about the perception and understanding about the notion of CPD, they have expressed through questionnaire. This study also shows about the lack of awareness among undergraduates about CPD. A cross sectional study was conducted in UOS, USA, UOL, RCRS, UMT and USA. Students of these institutes from Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Sciences department participated actively in providing data in their need and importance for CPD (Table 2). The research has five major categories learning opportunity, motives, schedule, learning style and learning environment of CPD.

According to a survey conducted by Irish physiotherapist's clinical supervision is the main part of professional development. ⁽⁹⁾ The results of this study clearly showed that many respondents prioritize that physiotherapy techniques should be practiced under supervision of professionals. Joanne Dowds explains the activities of CPD in which clinical supervision is one of the main activities included. ⁽¹⁾ Similarly John Launer explain in his article that reflective training, clinical supervision, field consultancy, executive assessment may be the different types of learning dialogue which are closely similar to one another and linked with each other. ⁽¹⁰⁾ In contrast of supervised practiced a study on Malaysian pharmacists focused on a process of CPD describing the individual based practice to identify the need of learning, making the goals to achieve the objectives and executing these goals and finally evaluating all the process to improve their practice. ⁽¹⁸⁾

Second category was about motives of CPD and 61.7% undergraduates were agreeing that moral values must teach during CPD activities. A study by Zubin Austin which was conducted on pharmacist concluded that pharmacist had a chance to talk about attitudes, individual behavior and fore choice with respect to CPD and CE. ⁽¹¹⁾ The important characteristics or attributes of medical personnel having the features of high noble traits and following rules of professionalism and moral behaviors as main considerations. ⁽¹²⁾

Third category it was about the schedule of CPD activities 44.4% undergraduates agreed that CPD events should be arranged on non-working days of week. The courses conducted on weekends allowing instructors to have a survey of clinical sites during working days of week. In this way instructors found opportunities to learn the reality of practice

environment and many examples provided which were useful for teaching. ⁽¹³⁾ Some professionals believed that it's more suitable to conduct courses on non-working days. ⁽¹⁴⁾

Fourth category was about learning style of CPD 62.8% agreed that didactic method of learning should be used in workshops. According to Marietjie de Villers, CPD activities are becoming increasingly didactic and theoretical. As example given in article, series of short courses are given to participants due to large attendances and not allowing practice sessions. ⁽¹⁵⁾ And to improve technical skills didactic teaching was recommended. In CPD workshops didactic method was most useful in problem solving tasks which are listed in courses. ⁽¹⁶⁾

The fifth and last category was about learning environment of CPD, 64.4% agreed to that being a student workshops should be preferred in small groups. GK Thompson conducted a study on "Effectiveness of small workshops" among farmers; according to this study small workshops can be an effective source of influencing farmers' views and beliefs along with facilitating various types of programs that control diseases. ⁽¹⁷⁾ An effective change in practice of clinical environment has been shown by a major shift of CPD model from an update by the evolution of minimal group CPD. This major approach in clinical practice of CPD should be appreciated. In this field the major challenge is to approach the effects on practicing clinical methods and its useful outcomes. ⁽¹⁶⁾ A study which is contrasting this statement and conducted on doctors describing the domains of CPD and discussing the wider environment for CPD including wider team and members from different professions involving organizations, colleagues, employees and patients. ⁽¹⁹⁾

While discussing the strengths of the study, it was unaddressed topic among undergraduates before the conduction of this study and made the students familiar to this topic as they were attending workshops, conferences and seminars but were not aware of Continuous Professional Development (CPD). The other strength of this study was that the researchers did not contact directly with respondents to reduce the risk of biasness. The study has also suffered from few limitations. Firstly, it is female dominant study as male and female ratio was not equal. Study sample is also small. Due to lack of time, data was not collected from all over the Pakistan. Respondents also gave improper response and misinterpreted the question statements. The tool

of this study was invalidated and the reflections of views of participant's given by this tool were also unknown. Many aspects of CPD were also not covered in this study e.g. time, location, funding, duration, certification etc. In future, more research work is required on this with equal ratio of male and female, with large sample size and population. Separate work is required for professional associations/organization that purely focuses on needs of CPD. It should be conducted among post-graduates of physical therapy as well as conducted for each division of Pakistan

CONCLUSION:

This study focused on the need as well as awareness of CPD among undergraduates of DPT. The results this study concluded that CPD events should be arranged on non-working days of the Week. The didactic method of learning should be used in workshops and physical therapy techniques should be supervised by professionals. The moral value should be during CPD activities and workshops should be arranged in small groups.

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