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Research Article

**AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF PHYSIOTHERAPY
PROFESSION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: A
POPULATION BASED SURVEY**¹Dr. Komal Azam, ²Dr Hafsa Naseem, ³Dr Iqra Arshad¹Physiotherapist at Amna Anayat Medical & Dental College Lahore, ²Physiotherapist at Royal Group of Colleges, Gujranwala, ³Physiotherapist, Gujranwala Institute of Rehabilitation Sciences.**Article Received:** July 2019**Accepted:** August 2019**Published:** September 2019**Abstract:**

The objective of this study was to investigate the awareness of Physical Therapy among undergraduate students. A cross sectional survey was administrated from undergraduate students of different universities of Gujranwala. Opinion from Participants was taken regarding there awareness level about physical therapy. For this purpose, a well-structured questionnaire was used to investigate about awareness of physical therapy. SPSS software and Microsoft excel was used for Data analysis. We have found that most of the participants were males. The main barrier of not having knowledge about this field is lack of interest of students towards this as they consider it not a well-developed field. Most of the students have just basic knowledge about the term physical therapy. We concluded that awareness of physical therapy needs to be improved among undergraduate students of Gujranwala.

Keywords: Awareness, Physical therapy, undergraduates.**Corresponding author:****Dr. Komal Azam,**

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INTRODUCTION:

Physiotherapy is health care profession carried out by physiotherapist whom through their examination, evaluation, diagnosis and physical intervention skill work on healing of impairments and disabilities and also help in promoting ambulation, functional abilities, quality of life and movements. It is performed by physical therapists [known as physiotherapists in many countries]. Physicians like Hippocrates and later Galen are believed to have been the first practitioners of physical therapy, advocating massage, manual therapy techniques and hydrotherapy to treat people in 460 BC. The earliest documented origins of actual physical therapy as a professional group date back to Per Henrik Ling, "Father of Swedish Gymnastics," who founded the Royal Central Institute of Gymnastics [RCIG] in 1813 for manipulation, and exercise. The first school of physiotherapy at the university of Otago in New Zealand in 1913 and then by USA in 1914. The first physiotherapy research was published in United State in March 1921 in the PT review. In 1921 Mary McMillan organized the physical therapy association called American physical therapy association [APTA]. Respondents agreed that the use of evidence in practice was necessary, that the literature was helpful in their practices, and that quality of patient care was better when evidence was used.[1].

In Pakistan, the school of Physiotherapy was established in 1956 by the Federal Government, Ministry of Health & Social Welfare with the assistance of World Health Organization [WHO] at Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center premises. Initially, the school offered a 2 years Diploma course with the minimum entrance qualification of matriculation [science group]. In 1996, the 2 years program was upgraded to a 3 years Diploma. Later on, the program was raised to BSc Physiotherapy Degree [3 years] in 1963, affiliated with the University of Karachi, and syllabus upgraded according to APTA. In 1999 BSc physiotherapy was upgraded into 4-year BS degree. Recently according to Vision 2020 of APTA the 4-year BSPT was upgraded to 5-year DPT [Doctor of physical therapy]. The aim of this qualitative study was to explore the experience of volunteering as a physiotherapist in a developing country in terms of the impact on the volunteer, the nature of the role, and the benefits to the patients as perceived by the participants.[2]. By

2020, physical therapy will be provided by physical therapists who are doctors of physical therapy, recognized by consumers and other health care professionals as the practitioners of choice to whom consumers have direct access for the diagnosis of, interventions for, and prevention of impairments, activity limitations, participation restrictions, and environmental barriers related to movement, function, and health.

Professional socialization is a process by which individuals learn the knowledge, skills, values, roles, and attitudes associated with their professional responsibilities[1]. Specialization in physiotherapy are Orthopedic physiotherapist, neurological physiotherapist, cardiovascular physiotherapist, Geriatric physiotherapist, pediatric physiotherapist, obstetrician physiotherapist, Electro physiotherapist, Musculo skeleton physiotherapist, Massage therapist etc. Physiotherapy as a profession is an occupation which requires specializations in various fields for the benefit of the society. Physiotherapy has evolved for decades in our country & has reached at higher position because of the educational system research & widespread practice. Hence the objective of study was to "assess the awareness & perception regarding physiotherapy in students at colleges. A lack of knowledge rather than a lack of interest was found to be the issue in the recruitment of high school students.

Literature review:

There are few researches available on this topic. Most of the studies are conducted among school students and higher secondary students. A recent study [Thushank D et al, 2014] was conducted to assess the level of awareness about physical therapy among Advanced level science students in the Kandy educational zone and to access the sources from which they could obtain information regarding physiotherapy. It was evident 2014 95% of students did not know that electrical modalities are available at physiotherapy units more than half of the study population was not aware of treatment methods used in physiotherapy. Overall awareness about physiotherapy was approximately 30.5%. In a study Yash Agarwal et al [2011] tells us about Awareness of physiotherapy among higher secondary school and preservice among physiotherapy students and professionals in Meerut-A survey 41% have an idea about awareness 26% students wanted to pursue as their career. Awareness of physiotherapy is still

lacking among higher secondary students and preservice in the profession among students is declining.[12]

Akin lade [2001] A study of level of awareness about physical therapy profession among undergraduates of obafemi Awolawo University indicates 80% of respondents were aware of occupational therapy profession with higher rates among males.40% had good knowledge of occupational therapy while majority had knowledge ranging from poor to moderate.The results of study provide information regarding the lack of awareness and knowledge Among students. Hence there is need of educating the future students regarding physical Therapy thereby reaching a better patient care. Harikrishan.R et al, [2017] conducted a survey to assess Awareness and attitude toward physiotherapy among higher secondary students. 82.22% have information regarding electrical modalities .Minor population 17.78% replied about bandages, tapes & splints. Only 8% aware of manual therapy .The student have moderate awareness about physically therapy. Awareness about the role of physically therapist in specialties other than orthopaedics is not satisfactory.Majority of the students are not aware, physiotherapy is a unique profession and practiced by physical-therapist. Appropriate measures have to be taken to increase the awareness and create a good attitude towards physiotherapy profession.

Victor -Prati -SPT et al,[2006] conducted a research to see Perception of college students regarding the current physical therapy profession and professional education process.The purpose of the study was to determine how undergraduate college students perceive Physical therapy as well as the new Doctor of Physical therapy [DPT] degree. Regarding education and acceptance of the new doctoral level degree, the

results give hope while showing the work that needs to be accomplished .However more than half the participants of study had never heard about the doctor of physical therapy degree.The study demonstrated that the students interviewed demonstrated a relatively positive attitude towards the profession of physical therapy describe its practitioner as some of the most competent in the medical field.Many more studies, concerned with different subset and areas will be needed to understand the Public perception of the profession and for the profession to become a major and stable force in the health care market.[11]

METHODOLOGY:

We had conducted a qualitative research by using self-constructed questionnaire [see Appendix A]. A cross-sectional survey was administered in the undergraduate students from different Universities of Gujranwala. Physical therapy Students were asked answer to the questions about physiotherapy professtion. A verbal/written consent was taken from all the participants according to Helsinki Declaration [Appendix B].

Study design: cross sectional survey

Sample size: 341 undergraduate students

Sampling technique: convenience sampling

Setting: Gujranwala institute of Rehabilitation sciences Gujranwala

Punjab University, Gujranwala Campus.

Gift university,Gujranwala

Inclusion criteria:Under Graduate students , 18 to 25 years of age.

Exclusion criteria: Those who did not fulfill the inclusion criteria were excluded

Measurements:

Data collection procedure: cross sectional survey

Data collection tool: questionnaire [close ended]

Time Line:

	FEB 2017	MAY 2017	APRIL 2017	MAY 2017	JUN 2017	JUL 2017	AUG 2017	SEP 2017	OCT 2017	NOV 2017
Preparation of project										
Data Collection										
Data Analysis & Report Writing										
Submission										

Statistical Analysis:

All the data was demonstrated percentage. Data was analyzed using SPSS [Statistical package for social sciences] and expressed in form of charts.

Results:

The research was completed and returned by 341 undergraduate students from University of Sargodha [Gujranwala Campus] ,Gift University [Gujranwala Campus] and Punjab University [Gujranwala Campus].

Participant's Characteristics:

Majority of participants were female [Figure 1] and age range were 22-25-year-old [Figure 2]. The greater

ratio of participants was from final year [67.30%] and affiliated with University of Sargodha [Figure 3].

Majority of participants were male [Figure 2] and age range were 18-21-year-old [Figure 1]. The greater percentage of the participants was from University of Sargodha [Gujranwala Campus] [Figure 3].

SECTION-I : DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**Age:**

18-21: 51.9%

22-25: 48.1%

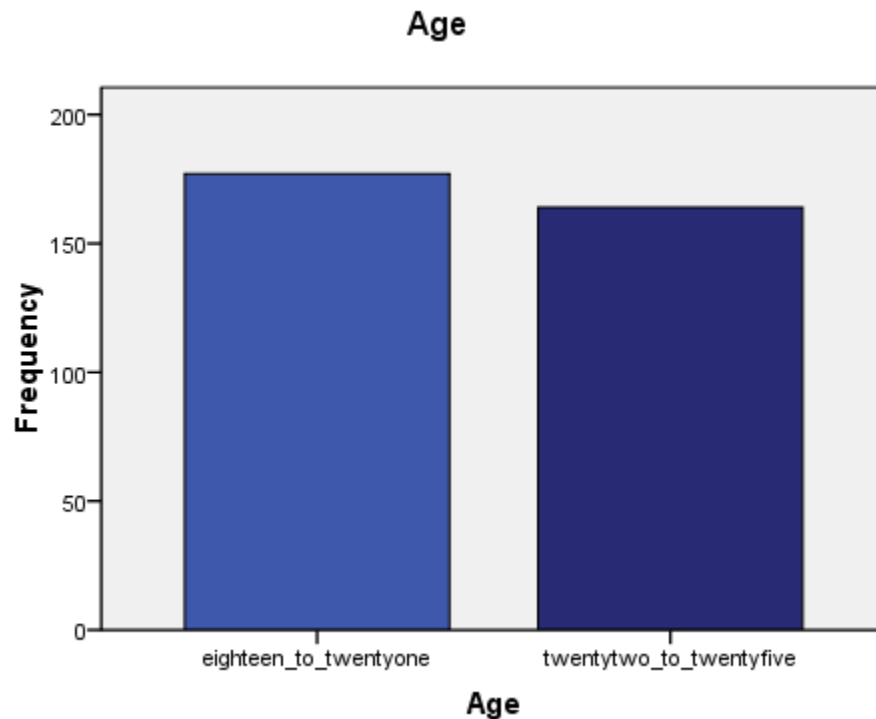


Figure 1: Participant's Age

Gender

Male: 54.8%

Female: 45.2%

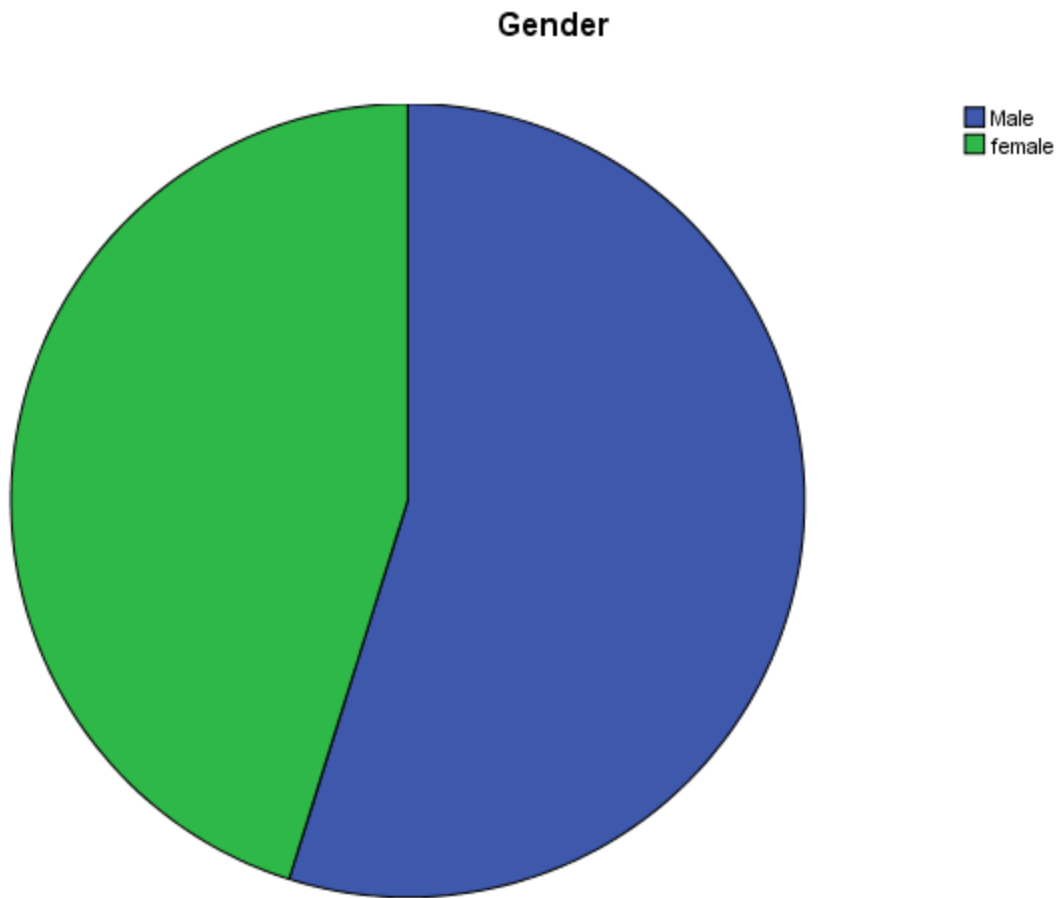


Figure 2: Participant's Characteristics

Affiliated University

University of sargodha, Gujranwala campus[UOSGC]: 51.0%
Gift University: 36.7%
Punjab University: 12.3%

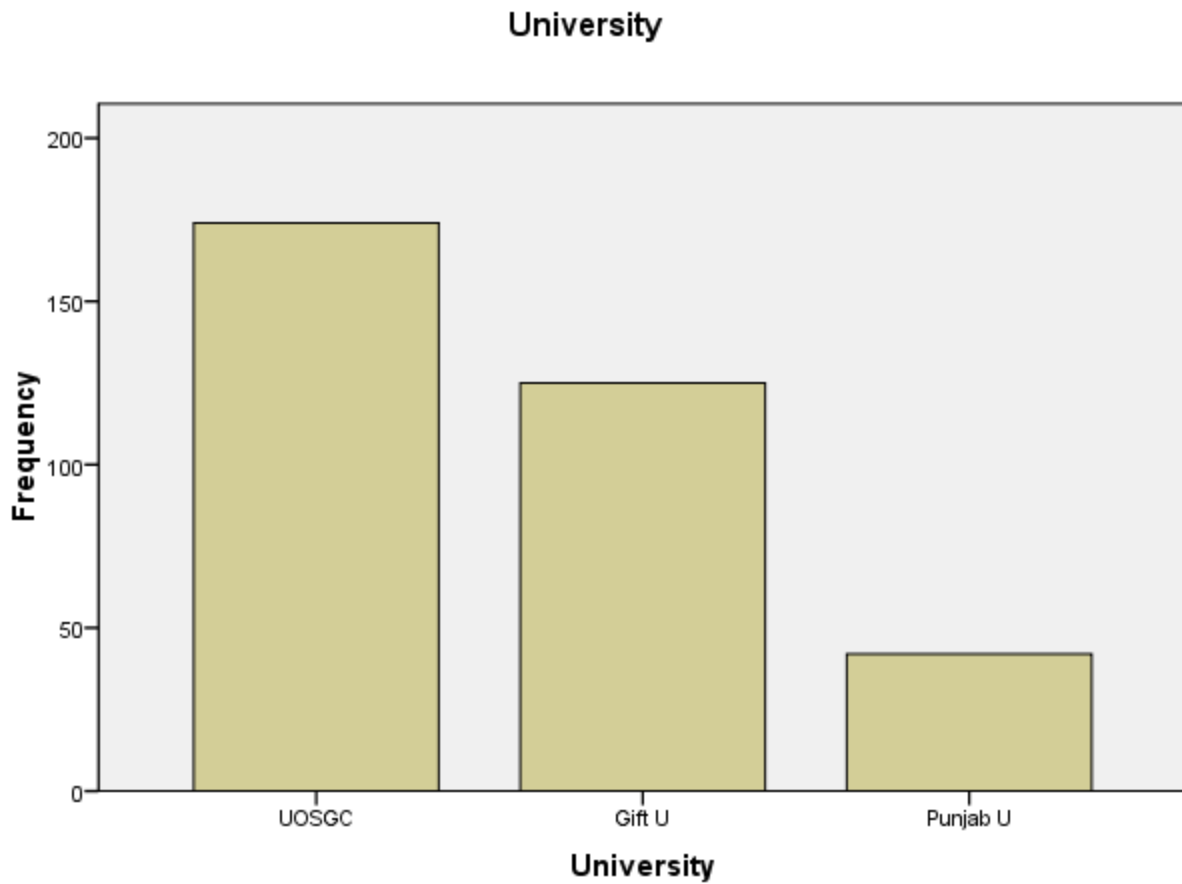


Figure 3: Affiliated University

Section-II Source of information about Physical Therapy Profession

Understanding of physical therapy term:

Most of the participants known to Physical Therapy.

Yes: 76.5%

No: 23.5%

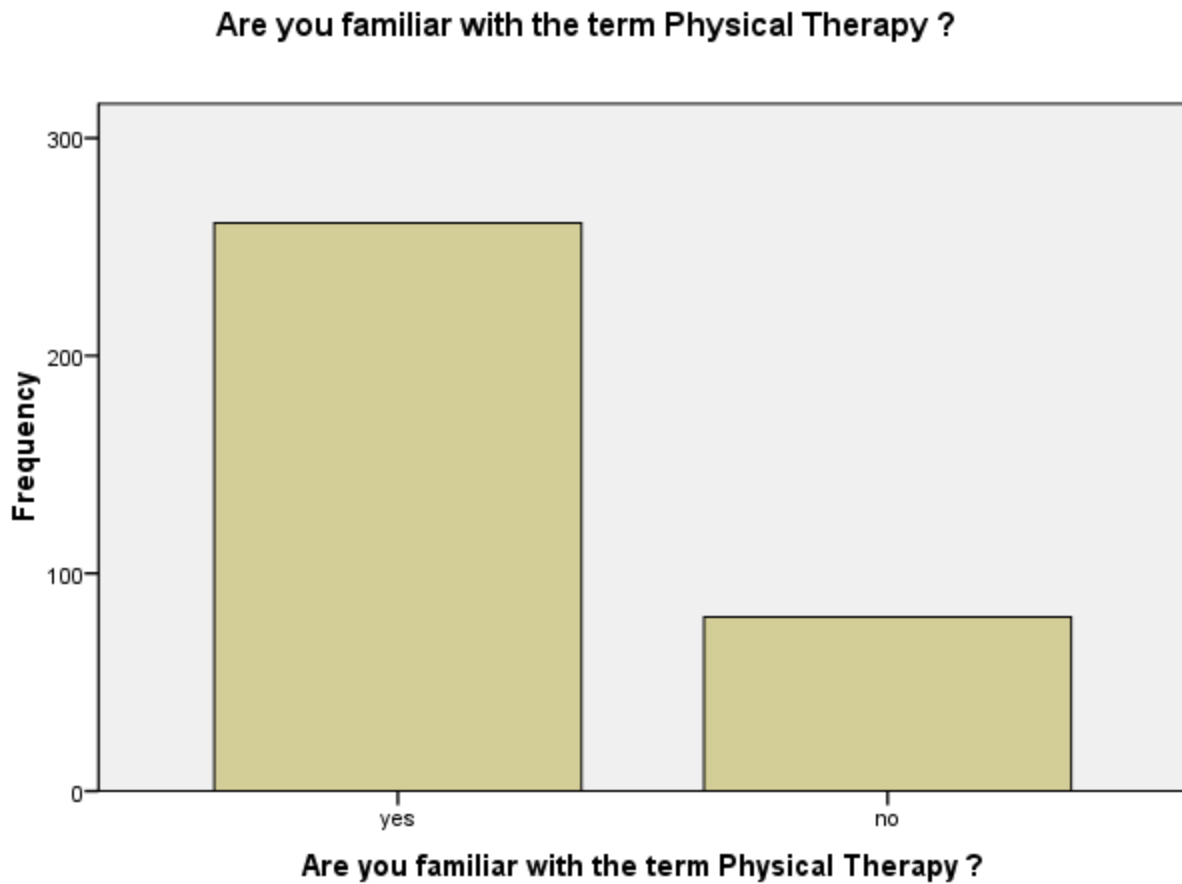


Figure 4: Understanding of physical therapy term

Source of information

Students came to know much about physical therapy through internet most often.

Internet/TV: 37.5%

Relatives: 21.4%

Literature: 26.1%

Newspaper: 15.0%

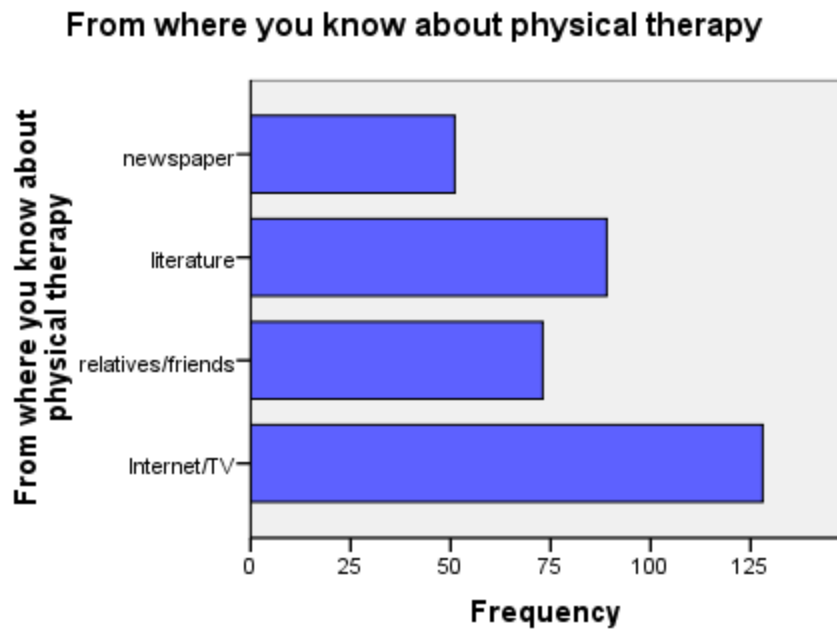


Figure 5: Source of information

Seminar:

Most of the students did not had any exposure to seminar on awareness of physical therapy.

Yes: 19.6%

No: 80.4%

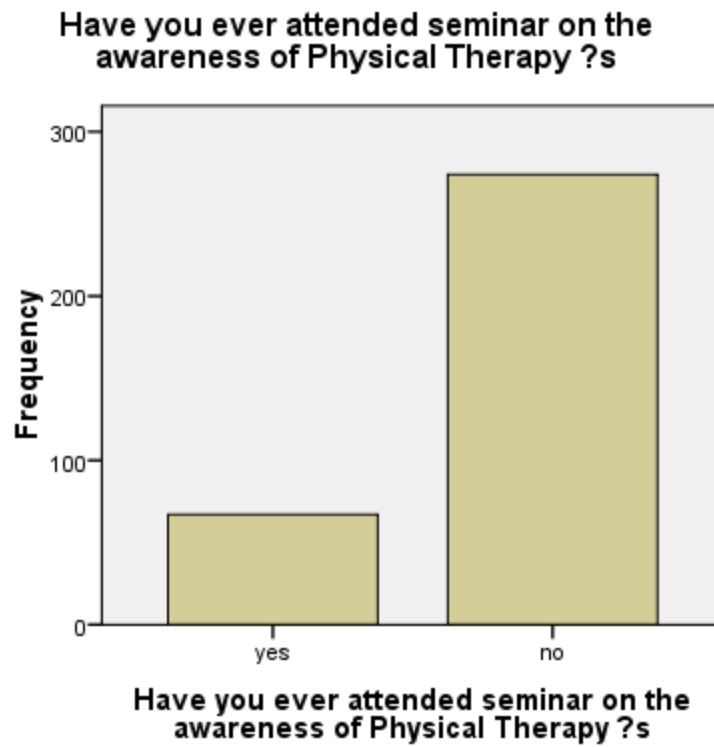


Figure 6: Exposure to Seminar

PT department visit

Yes: 33.7%

No: 66.3%

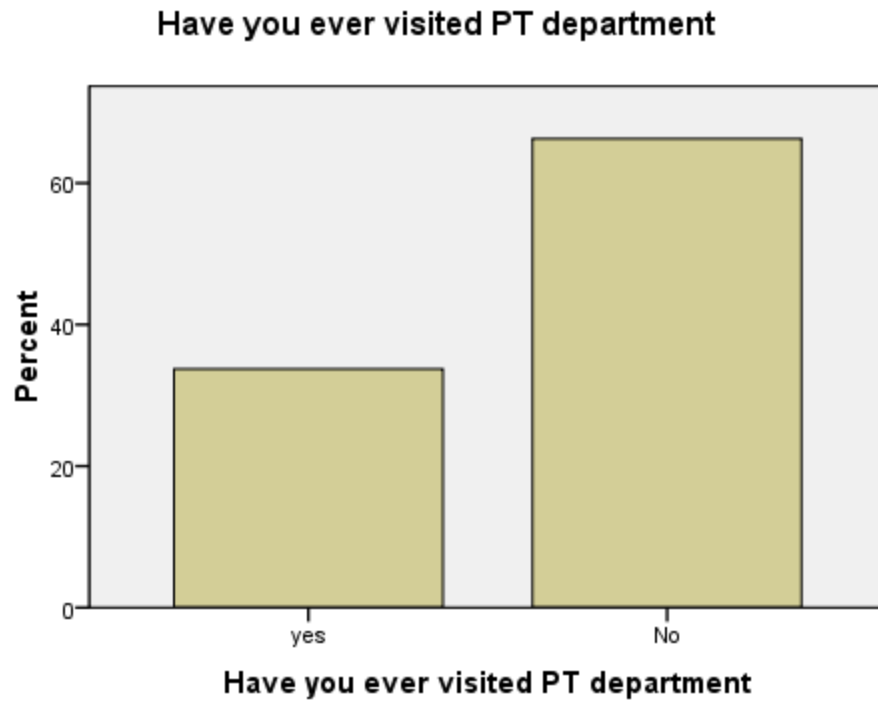


Figure 7: PT department visit

Awareness about scope of Physical Therapy in Pakistan:

Yes: 52.5%

No: 47.5%

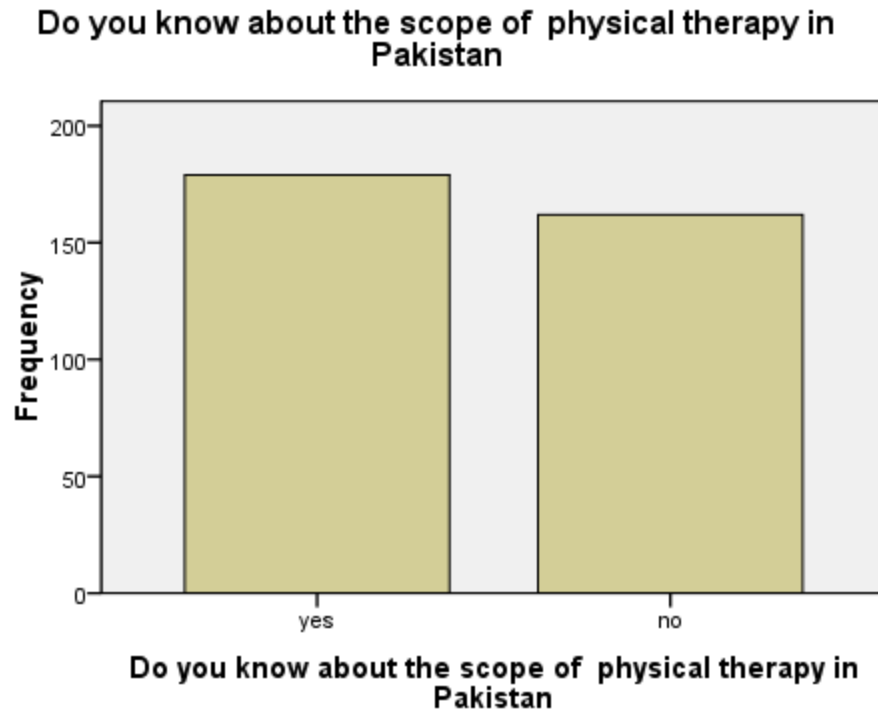


Figure 8: Awareness of Scope of Physical Therapy

Section-III Knowledge of Physical Therapy Profession

Physical Therapy is

- Practised by PT Doctors: 43.7%
- Practised by Technicians: 15.5%
- Practised by Masseurs: 29.3%
- Practised by Orthopedic Surgeon: 11.4%

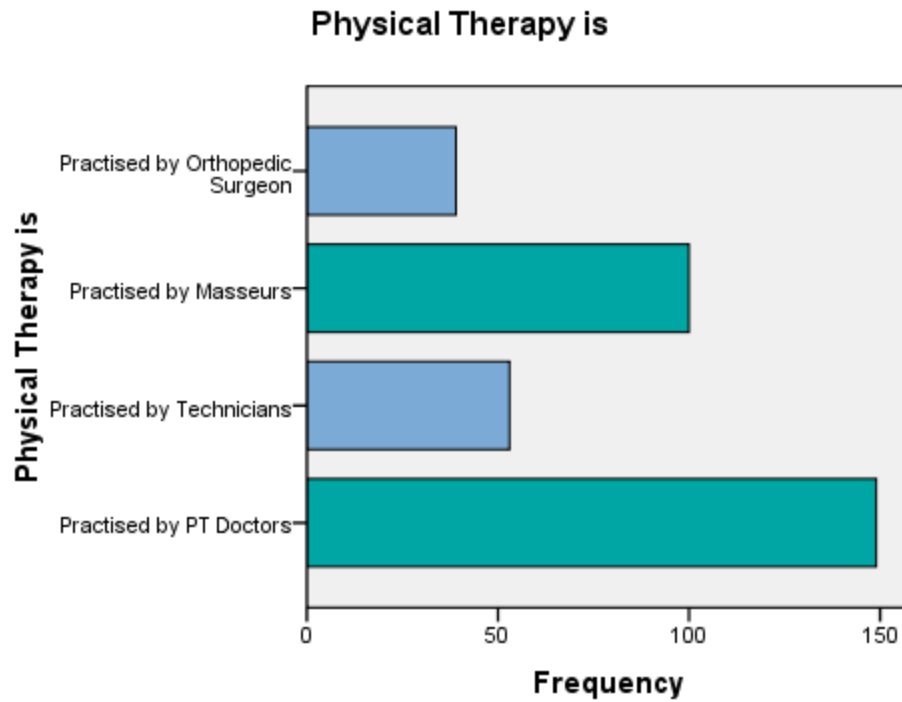


Figure 9 : Physical Therapy is

PT Unit includes

Manual Therapy: 37.0%

Electrical Modalities: 23.5%

Gym balls & other exercise equipment: 28.4%

Hydrotherapy: 11.1%

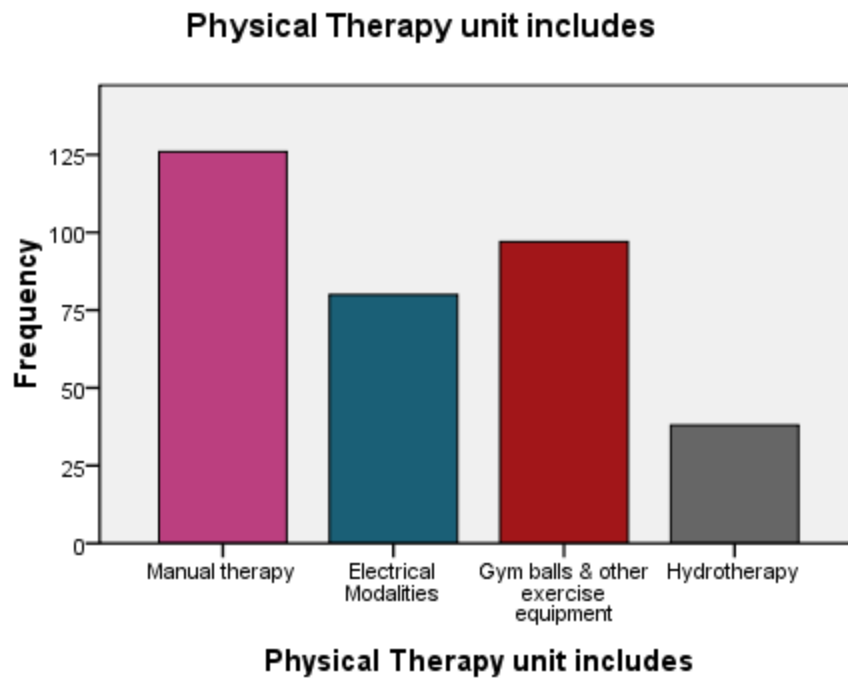


Figure 10: PT unit includes

**Section-IV Knowledge of Physical Therapy services
Referral for Physical Therapy treatment**

Yes: 33.1%

No: 66.9%

Have you receive reffeval for a physical therapy treatment by a doctor

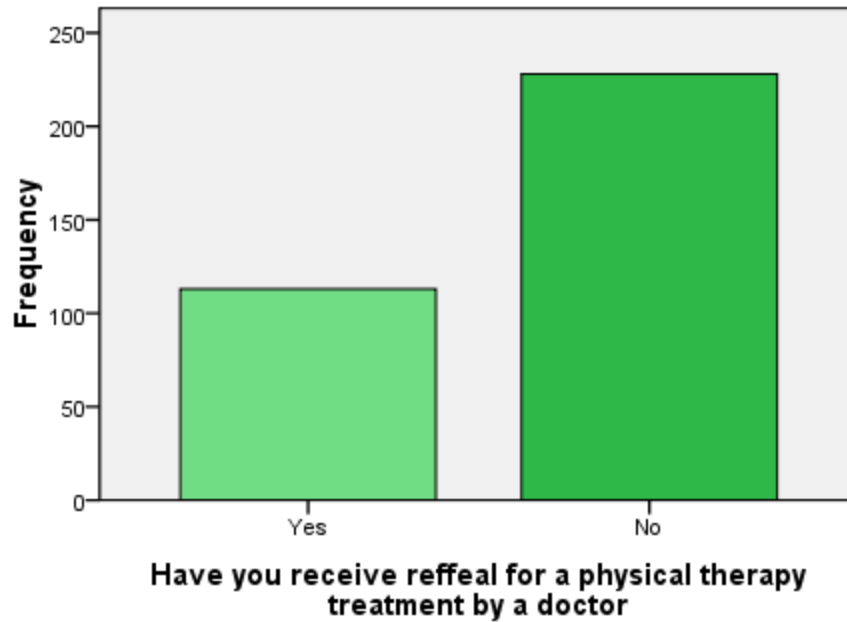


Figure 11: Referral for physiotherapy treatment

Role of Physical Therapist

According to participants Major Role of Physical Therapist was in Joint related injuries and Muscular problems.

Joint related Injuries: 36.7%

Spinal Injuries: 16.7%

Stroke: 19.6%

Muscular Problems: 27.0%

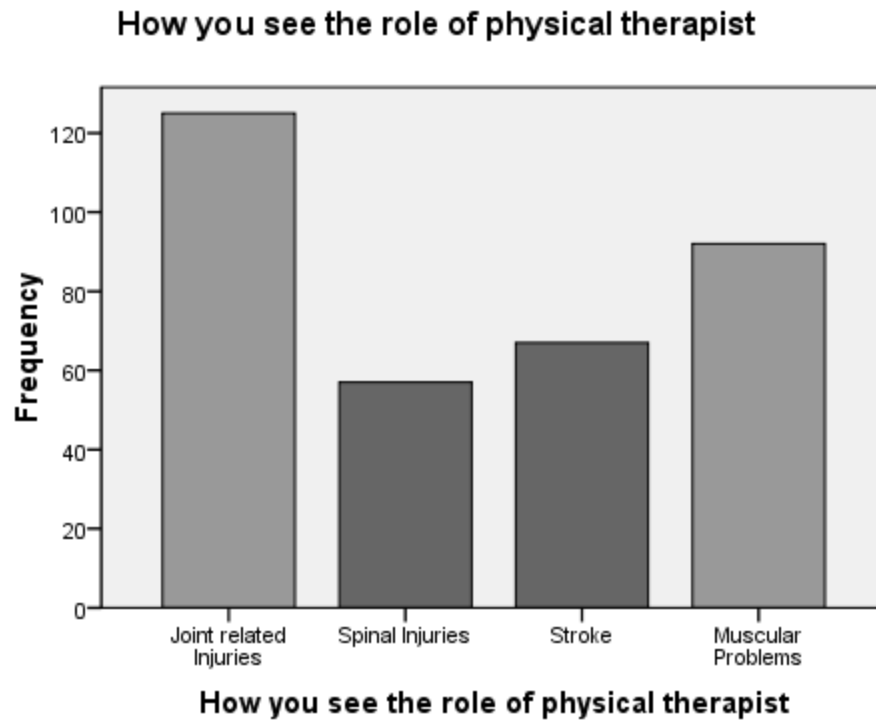


Figure 12: Role of PT

Treatment by Therapist

PT treatment was Effective.

Effective: 72.7%

Not Effective: 27.3%

If you have ever got treatment by Therapist,how you rate its effectiveness

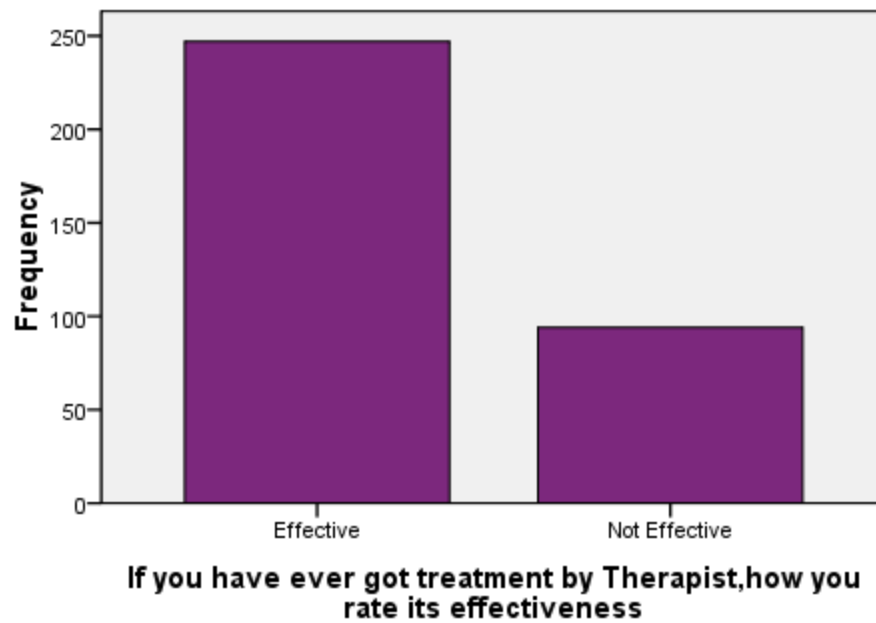


Figure 13: Effectiveness of treatment

Who needs PT Services?

Participants consider that Older population and sportsman/Athlete need more Physical Therapy Services.

Sportsman/Athlete: 35.5%

Older population: 45.2%

Children: 10.9%

Fitness training: 8.5%

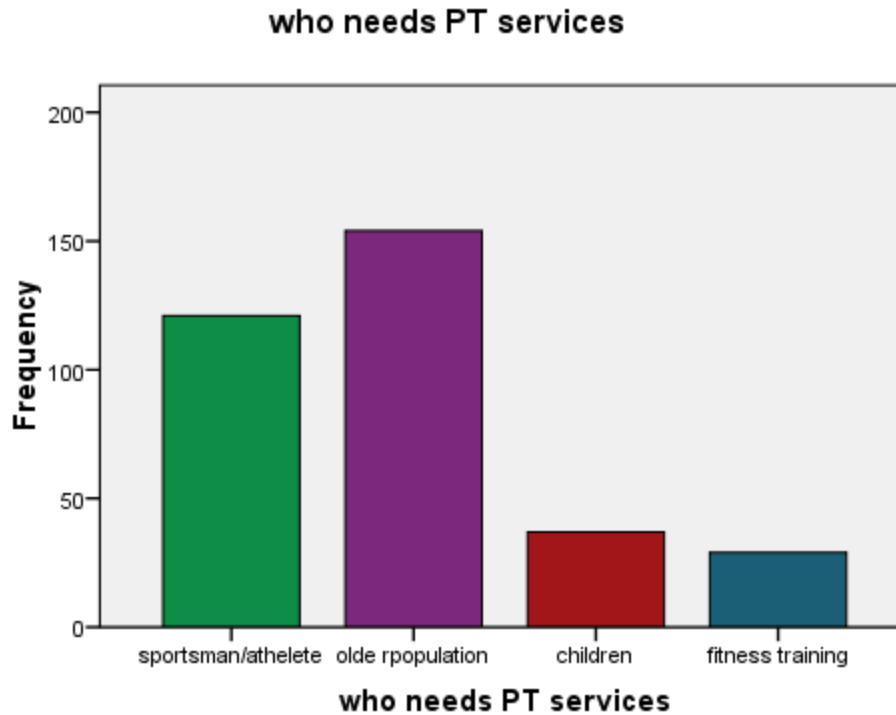


Figure 14: PT services

DISCUSSION:

The main focus of study was to inquire the awareness of Physical Therapy profession among under-graduate students. Finding of research shows that general information provides better opportunities to get treatment⁶. In compliance to Questionnaire, respondents who have been selected from universities are in undergraduate programs. Data indicates 54.8% participants were male and 45.2 % were females. At present, males in under graduation are the dominant part of our research². In research, Majority of students were from University of Sargodha [Gujranwala Campus] because this university has various departments. Awareness level among under-graduate students is 76.5% about Physiotherapy Profession. Majority of the students [37.5%] had the opportunity to get information from Internet/TV about Physical Therapy profession because of its excessive use in our society .Other sources include Literature [26.1%], Friends/Relatives [21.4%] and Newspaper [15%]. According to our research 52.5% of students know about the scope of physical Therapy in Pakistan. According to undergraduate students Electrical

modalities[23.5%], Gym ball and other Exercise Equipment[28.4%],Manual Therapy [37.0%],Hydrotherapy[11.1%] are used for treatment purpose and students consider Physical-therapy treatment in Joint related injuries [36.7%],Muscular problem [27.0%],Stroke [19.6%] and Spinal injuries [16.7%].The need for Physical-therapy services include the major proportion for Elderly population [45.2%],Sportsman/Athlete [35.5%],Children [10.9%] and Fitness training [8.5%], according to undergraduate students. A minor Population of students [19.6%] had attended any seminar on the awareness of Physical-therapy [33.1%] of the students said that they had received referral for Physical-therapy treatment by a doctor. There were less number of researches on the awareness of physical therapy. Mostly the researches were done by the foreigners. However few researches were also done in Pakistan related to this topic but in Gujranwala it is our first attempt to make the people aware about physical therapy and to perceive it as a stable and recognized profession.

CONCLUSION:

Participants in this study demonstrated a high level of awareness of Physiotherapy services. Overall 76.5% participants were aware about Physical therapy profession. The mass media served as the main sources of information that enhanced the level of awareness. However, there is still a need for more enlightenment to enable the students appreciate the importance of Physiotherapy services in Gujranwala. Physiotherapist in Gujranwala need to maintain and even build upon the level of awareness of their profession among the students in the Gujranwala by arranging seminar and free camp of physiotherapy for treatment. A positive outlook about the profession will go a long way to boost their clinical practice and enhance the growth of the profession in the country.

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