



THE PERCEPTION OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND LEGAL ASPECTS OF PHYSIOTHERAPY AMONG PHYSIOTHERAPIST IN MAHARASHTRA- AN OBSERVATIONAL SURVEY STUDY

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Abstract: An important aspect of physiotherapy professional autonomy is the ethical code of the profession. In Indian scenario, patient rely more on the Physiotherapist and ethical code is very important. So everyone should know about the professional ethics and legal aspects of physiotherapy. This was a survey study conducted on 100 Registered Qualified Physiotherapist from a State Council in Maharashtra district. Sampling technique was purposive sampling and study material was Self-structured Validated Questionnaire. The self-structured questionnaire which was evaluated and validated by five Physiotherapist expert who has the experience of 10 years. After the validation, the questionnaire form was distributed through link to the Maharashtra Physiotherapist. Confidentiality of all responses were assured. The result shows the knowledge of professional ethics and legal aspect of Physiotherapy among Physiotherapist in Maharashtra district and the maximum awareness about the Domain. And the study concluded that the knowledge about the Legal aspect is slightly greater than the Professional Ethics. And among the domain, Domain 3 (Infrastructural requirements of a clinic) has maximum awareness. Overall, we can say that the Ethical and Legal aspect knowledge is good among Physiotherapist in Maharashtra district.

Index term: Physiotherapy knowledge, Ethics, Legal aspects, Maharashtra, Physiotherapist

1. INTRODUCTION:

An important aspect of physiotherapy professional autonomy is that the ethics of the profession, both collectively and for the individual member of the profession. Physical therapy may be rapidly expanding and maturing profession. The number and sizes of physical therapy departments are increasing at a significant rate.

'Ethics' derives from, the Greek word "ethicos" which suggest arising from custom. Ethics is that the code written or unwritten that guides the behaviour of citizen, within the context of various cultures and situations.

"Physiotherapy" means a branch of modern medical science which includes examination, assessment, interpretation, physical diagnosis, planning and execution of the treatment and advice to any person for the aim of preventing, correcting, alleviating and limiting dysfunction, acute and chronic bodily malfunction including life saving measures via chest physiotherapy within the intensive care units, curing physical disorder or disability promoting physical fitness, facilitating healing and pain relief and therefore the treatment of physical and psychosomatic disorders through modulating physiological and physical response using physical agents, activities and devices including exercises, mobilisation, manipulation, therapeutic, ultrasound, electrical and thermal agents and electrotherapy for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

“Physiotherapist” means an individual who possesses physiotherapy qualification obtained from a recognised institution and whose name has been enrolled in the Register of Physiotherapists.

Ethics in physiotherapy is the moral code of conduct between the therapist and her patient or client, and the therapist and other healthcare professionals based on mutual respect and trust.

Almost every patient depends on physiotherapist because they think that the physiotherapist will take care of them, and they will provide time when the physiotherapist must plan to provide best and evidence treatment planer for the patient by getting their legal consent about the services. The best treatment for them, the time has come when the physical therapist should consider the efficacy of agreement about the treatment plan by obtaining informed consent from the patient .¹⁻⁴ Today physiotherapy is an independent practice. This trend is going to prove that physiotherapy profession does not depend only on referrals. The physiotherapist is legally efficient to assess and plan a correct treatment for patients.

Healthcare professionals are confronted with a variety of ethical and regulatory issues in today 's ever-changing practice environments. Doing what is best for the patient is usually influenced and, at times, compromised by external factors, including rules and regulations related to the third party payment systems. Medicare, Medicaid, and commercial carriers have established conditions of participation. Ethical issues may confront practitioners which will create dilemmas between what is and what should be.

Simply stated, ethics, or ethics, is critical, analytical brooding about the behavioural expressions of human interdependence and what's the morally right thing to try to do. Currently, the complexities of practice have given rise to moral questions that demand the participation of both medical personnel and academic ethicists in discussing the problems involved. Some ethical problems are specific to physiotherapist because what they are doing is different from what physicians, nurses, and other health professionals do.

The ethical dimension of actual clinical practice isn't well documented within the literature. Ethical development has been cited as a basic objective of physical therapy education,⁵ and number of other authors have noted an ethical dimension within the routine functions of the physiotherapist.^{6, 7-12}

In Indian scenario, patient rely more on the Physiotherapist and ethical code is very important. So everyone should realize the professional ethics and legal aspects of physiotherapy as it is important to carry out professional practice through the guidelines of WCPT and MAHARASHTRA OT-PT COUNCIL. The medico-legal practice have the sensible role in the development of profession and in the betterment of patient.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY:

2.1 Study Design: Survey

2.2 Study Set Up: Maharashtra

2.3 Sample Size: 100

2.4 Sampling Technique: Purposive sampling

2.5 Study Material: Self-structured validated questionnaire

2.6 Inclusion Criteria:

Registered Qualified Physiotherapy of state council

2.7 Procedure:

Ethical Committee approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethical Committee, before the commencement of research work.

Self-structured Questionnaire regarding the professional ethics and legal aspects was developed and evaluated and validated by the five Physiotherapist expert who has the experienced of at least 10 years by accepting, modifying, and not accepting remarks.

After that the validated questionnaire form was distributed through a link to the Maharashtra Physiotherapist. The link was prepared on the google forms and was shared among the Physiotherapist through e-mail, soft copy and other sources.

The Questionnaire is a closed-ended question sheet consisting of 26 question which was divided into 3 Domains. Domains as follows:

Domain 1 about the Professional Ethics, Domain 2 about the Documentation, Domain 3 about the Infrastructural requirements of a clinic. Confidentiality of all responses was assured. And the responses or the answer will be analysed statistically.

2.8 Outcome Measures:

Self-structured questionnaire

3. RESULT:

The present survey was conducted on 100 Physiotherapist among Maharashtra district.

From the study we came to know that the knowledge about the Professional ethics among physiotherapist is 73% that means 73% of therapist are aware of Ethics about physiotherapy, 15.14% are not aware, 11.86% has an idea to a certain extent as shown in below table.

Table 1 depicts the percentage of awareness about professional ethics among physiotherapist

	Yes	No	To a certain extent
Professional Ethics	73%	15.14%	11.86%

And the knowledge about the Legal aspect which include Domain 2 & 3 i.e. Documentation and Infrastructural requirements of a clinic among the physiotherapist is 75.85%, 17.56% has no knowledge, and 6.59% had an idea to a certain extent as shown in below table.

Table 2 depicts the percentage of awareness about legal aspects among the physiotherapist

	Yes	No	To a certain extent
Documentation (D1)	75.38%	16.25%	8.37%
Infrastructural requirements of a clinic (D2)	76.2%	18.51%	5.29%
Legal aspects (D1+D2)	75.85%	17.56%	6.59%

And the maximum awareness about the domain among the physiotherapist is given in table below

Table 3 depicts the percentage of awareness among the domain

	YES	NO	TO CERTAIN EXTENT
DOMAIN 1 (PROFESSIONAL ETHICS)	73%	15.10%	11.80%
DOMAIN 2(DOCUMENTATION)	75.38%	16.25%	8.37%
DOMAIN 3 (INFRASTRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS OF A CLINIC)	76.20%	18.51%	5.29%

Overall, both the Professional ethics and Legal aspects knowledge about physiotherapy among physiotherapist in Maharashtra district is higher.

And the knowledge about the Legal aspects (75.85%) is significantly greater than the knowledge about the Professional ethics among the Physiotherapist.

And as we compare between the domains; Domain 3(infrastructural requirements of a clinic) has the maximum awareness among the physiotherapist i.e. 76.20%.

Figure 1 indicate the knowledge of professional ethics of physiotherapy among physiotherapist

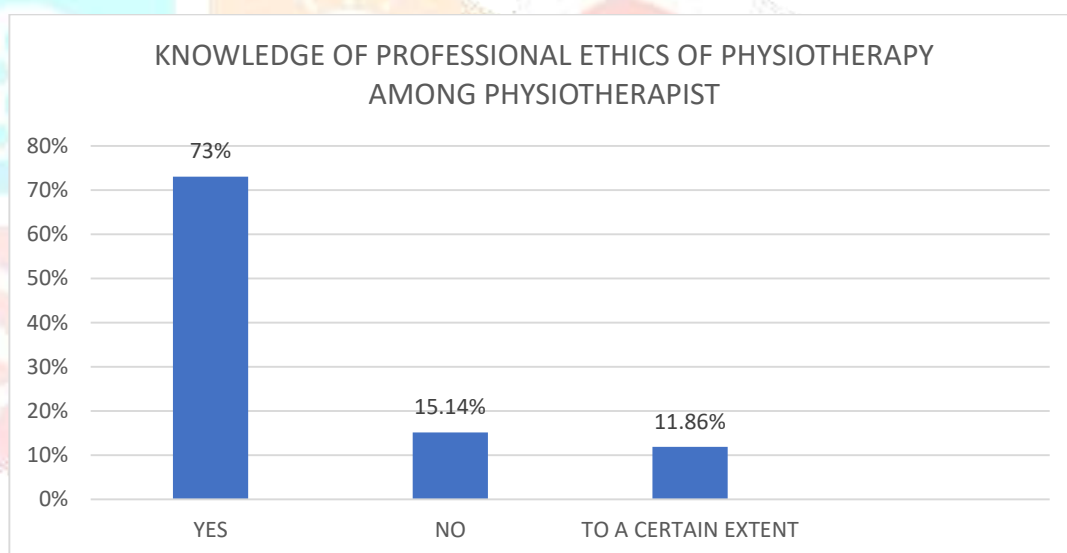


Figure 2 indicate the knowledge of legal aspects among physiotherapist

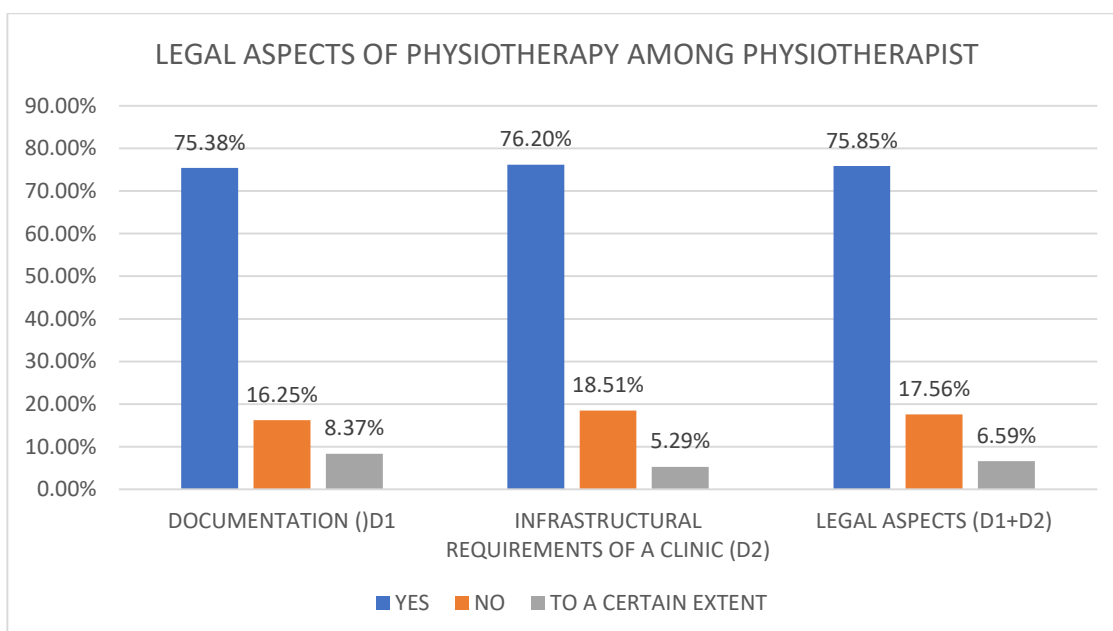
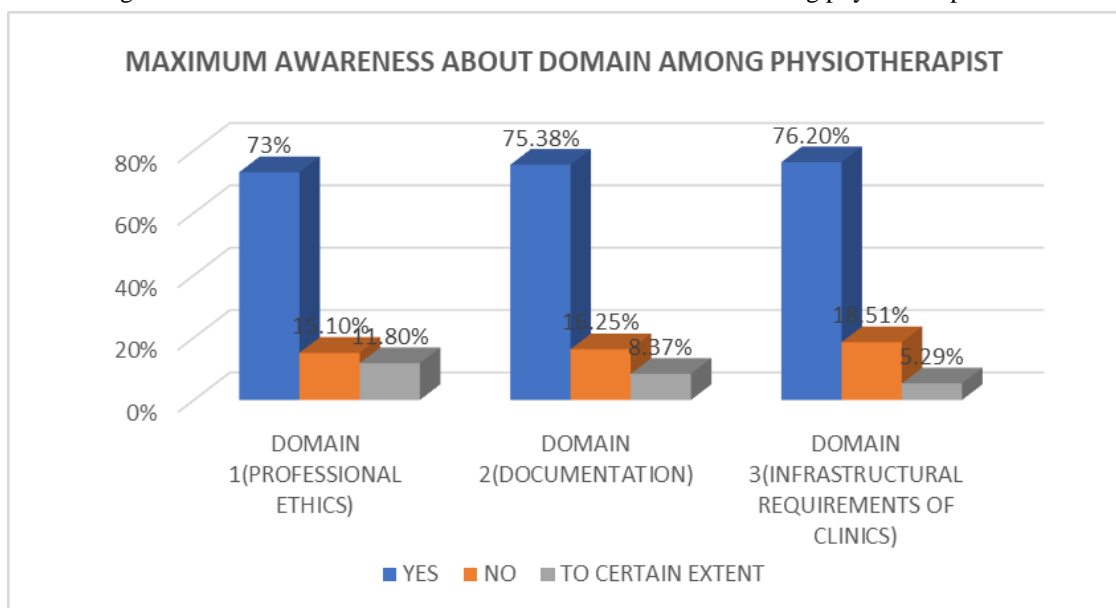


Figure 3 indicate the maximum awareness about the domain among physiotherapist



4. DISCUSSION:

The survey was conducted on the physiotherapist among the Maharashtra district to know about the knowledge of professional ethics and legal aspects of physiotherapy.

The questionnaire which was prepared consist of three Domains.

Domain 1 regarding the The Professional Ethics and the knowledge among the physiotherapist about domain 1 was 73% as shown in graph 1, 15% was not aware and 12% had an idea to the certain extent. Professional Ethics is a moral code of conduct between the therapist and the patient. The need to identify professional ethics within health profession as the profession assumes responsibility for the direct patient care. By doing so, he carefully guards the right of patient, maintain the integrity as a professional and promotes the ideals of physical therapy as a profession. The knowledge is better regarding the Ethics in Maharashtra district but we have to improve it further by various awareness program.

The current knowledge is 73% but it should be up to 100% because it is the responsibility of physiotherapist to know about the ethics of the profession as it helps in patient care.

Domain 2 regarding Documentation of the patient record and which should be carried out by physiotherapist in their daily practices and the awareness was 75.85% as shown in the graph 2, 16.25% was not aware and 8.37% had an idea to a certain extent.

The need of documentation it is legal requirements to maintain the patient records which can be used in future in any case. According to WCPT, physical documentation should include the demographic data, consent, examination, assessment, diagnosis, treatment, plan of care, result, recording the achievement of goals, home program, cancel appointments, and discharge plan. Accurate documentation facilitate information concerning the patient to all member of the health care team which is important in patient care. In addition, documentation can be used for research and quality activities and for medicolegal purposes. It provide evidence of care provided and decision made which ensure continuity of care. To make it 100% the documentation process should be followed by all therapist so that it provide the patient with quality care and helps to monitor the patient progress.

Domain 3 regarding the Infrastructural requirements of a clinic from the graph 3 it is shown that 76% are aware of the clinical setup, 19% had no idea about the clinical setup and 5% had an idea to certain extent. The knowledge about this Domain is more as compared to other two Domain. Clinics with all the proper setup that include all the modality and the knowledge to use them without causing harm to the patient and the proper maintenance of machine help in patient progress. A good clinical setup help in patient care and rehabilitation and improve the Quality of Life.

We can say that overall, the Ethical and legal knowledge is good among the physiotherapy in Maharashtra district but it should be even more. And the knowledge about the Domain 3 (Infrastructural requirements of a clinic) is more than the Domain 1 (Professional Ethics) and Domain 2 (Documentation).

5. CONCLUSION:

Professional Ethics and Legal aspects are the main foundation of the physiotherapy profession. And the knowledge about the Legal aspect is slightly greater than the Professional Ethics. And among the domain, Domain 3 (Infrastructural requirements of a clinic) has maximum awareness. Overall, we can say that the Ethical and Legal aspect knowledge is good among Physiotherapist in Maharashtra district but we also must focus to improve it further.

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