

Why do students get enroll in physiotherapy course?

A Cross-sectional study

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Abstract: Background: An individual with movement disorders, brought on by injury or disease, may get direct patient care from a physiotherapist (PT) in order to achieve their higher level of physical function and mobility. The most effective method of treating physical discomfort has been physical therapy. The number of universities and institutions offering the DPT degree program, and the number of students enrolled in the program both reflect the profession's rapid growth in different areas. A 5-year educational program leading to the doctor of physical therapy (DPT) degree includes courses in fundamental medical sciences in the first two years and in following 3 years it includes clinical sciences. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan oversees the DPT curricula, which is a 5-year degree/10-semester prospectus with 175 credit hours. Physical therapy has a long history in our country dating all the way back to 1955, but it wasn't a mainstream career until 2008.

Objective: The aim of this study is to determine the reasons why students enrolled in doctor of physical therapy course and the factors affecting the students' choice in getting enrolled in DPT.

Materials and methods: This is a cross-sectional study to find out the reasons why students enroll in physiotherapy course. The study was conducted in different universities of Gujranwala, Lahore and Sialkot. According to inclusion and exclusion criteria 370 subjects were selected. The data was collected from both male and female students. A questionnaire was filled by the subjects. Data was analyzed by SPSS version 20.0.

Conclusion: It was concluded that parent's suggestions was most influencing factor to in choice of DPT and most of the student's received information about this physiotherapy course from friends and relatives.

Key words: DPT, Medical Sciences, Rehabilitation, Health care professional, Physical Therapy.

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INTRODUCTION:

Physical therapists are medical professionals who assist patients in maintaining, re-establishing, and recovering movement and functional activity and performance to enable the best possible presentation of their body and improve their well-being and quality of life. A 5-year educational program leading to the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree consists of courses in basic medical sciences for the first two years and the clinical sciences for the following three years of this degree. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan oversees the DPT curriculum, which is a 5-year degree/10-semester program with 175 credit hours. The number of universities and institutions offering the DPT degree program or course, and the number of students enrolled in the program both reflect the enormous growth of the profession.

The personal scope of physical therapy consists of the

different types of activities. For these types of activities, the physiotherapist is educated and trained. To become a great practitioner and to widen the scope of practice, the physical therapist must have enough knowledge and training. The skills and experience are of great importance in the scope of practice of physical therapist. These skills help the disabled person to become healthy in short period of time.(Nyamwange, 2016)

Sometimes choosing a profession is also influenced by what one's peers choose to do. Family, parents, friends, culture, academic success, health considerations, current income level and financial constraints, media influences, prospective income levels, employment opportunities, the social acceptability of professions, recognition, and work satisfaction are additional factors that affect career choice of a student. Socioeconomic factors play a significant role in influencing students' career decisions.(Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017)

According to a previous study, as compared to those students who are in dominant occupations or professions place less emphasis on both money and opportunity. Students enrolling in physical therapy programs were not contrasted to other professionals, however it is interesting to note that there were no variations in pay or opportunities for promotion between the sexes like in males or females.(Strange & Rea, 1983)

The profession chosen by students are mostly comparable to their parent's profession or jobs. It is due to different reasons either by lack of interest or by their parents' choice. Some students take admission because they see their parents successful in their career and interesting work. Additionally, it was discovered that some pupils register because of their parental origins or experiences, which have a significant impact on how youngsters decide on a field or a professional degree. Ancestors and forefathers background influence pupils to join their career according to their parents and relatives.(Amani & Mkumbo, 2018)

The participation of parents and pupils' consciousness are significantly correlated or linked with the decision of choosing career. It all depends on how educators carry out their responsibility or obligation to educate kids and new future pupils. Students will be more conscious when choosing their careers because of the improved role. For this reason, both parents and instructors should do their parts to equip both male and female pupils for their careers. For pupils to be better equipped for professional prospects, educators and parents should continue to play a part in career exploration.(Venant, Arego, & Ngussa, 2021)

The main purpose of the study was to find out the reasons why students enroll in physiotherapy course and the sources of advice used by students to get enrolled in DPT. There is no such study conducted in Pakistan yet. This study will create awareness among the community about factors that affect the student's career choices and will provide opportunities for future researchers to conduct more studies on the reasons for career choices and career counseling strategies.

METHODOLOGY:

This is a cross-sectional study to find out the reasons why students enroll in physiotherapy course. The study was conducted in different universities of Gujranwala, Lahore and Sialkot. According to inclusion and exclusion criteria 370 subjects were selected. The data was collected from both male and female students.

Inclusion criteria

- Students of age group 18-25 years
- Students of first to final year of DPT.
- Both males and females were included.

Exclusion criteria

- Physiotherapy Professionals

- Students other than physiotherapy
- Students of age group more than 25

Data collection tool:

A questionnaire (Scutter, 1990) was used which consists of three parts:

- Age distribution of students
- The importance of factors in course choice
- Sources of information about course choice

Data collection procedure:

This was a cross-sectional survey to find out the reasons why students enroll in physiotherapy course. The subjects were selected according to convenient sampling technique from the universities of three different cities of Punjab, Pakistan i.e., Gujranwala, Lahore, and Sialkot. According to inclusion and exclusion criteria 370 subjects were enrolled. The students were informed about the purpose of study and procedures. The questionnaire was distributed among students. The data was collected from both male and female students. The questionnaire was filled by the subjects and results were recorded.

Data analysis procedure:

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), version 20.0 was used for data analysis with the help of which data entry, data coding, demographical statistics, frequency distribution of all variables mean, standard deviation, and related statistical test was done and then results were interpreted.

RESULTS:

The study showed that two main factors affecting the career choice in DPT students were parents suggestions and intention to help other people. For the factor, 'parent suggested it' while choosing DPT course, 20.0% not influenced, 17.0% influenced a little, 16.2% influenced quite a lot, 40.8% influenced by a great deal and 5.9% don't know if their choice was influenced. For the factor, 'always wanted to help others' while choosing DPT course, 21.1% not influenced, 18.6% influenced a little 23.0% influenced quite a lot, 28.1% influenced by a great deal and 9.2% don't know if their choice was influenced. The results for all other factors are summarized in *Table 1*. The two major sources of advice used for career choice are career guidance counselor and friends/relatives who are physiotherapists.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of subjects' response for the factors affecting choice of physiotherapy course

	Not at all	A little	Quite a lot	A great deal	Don't know
Interesting work	25.1	28.6	15.7	18.4	12.2
Well paid job	31.1	29.5	12.7	9.2	17.6
Opportunity for advancement	29.5	28.4	15.9	13.5	12.7
Status	34.1	28.1	15.1	10.3	12.4
Secure job	32.4	28.9	12.2	11.6	14.9
Opportunity to be your own boss	28.1	22.2	18.6	18.4	12.7
Satisfying, worthwhile work	26.5	23.8	20.5	15.7	13.5
Good working conditions	28.9	28.4	17.3	14.1	11.1
Always wanted to	33.2	27.8	15.9	12.4	10.5
Opportunity to travel to another city	37.2	23.7	11.1	15.1	12.7
Wanted to help others	21.1	18.6	23.0	28.1	9.2
Parents suggested it	20.0	17.0	16.2	40.8	5.9
Teachers suggested it	42.7	24.9	11.4	8.4	12.7
School counselor suggested it	48.9	21.6	9.7	6.8	13.0
Did not gain admission to course of first choice	39.2	22.2	11.4	11.4	15.9
Redundancy from previous employment	43.2	23.0	10.0	3.2	20.5

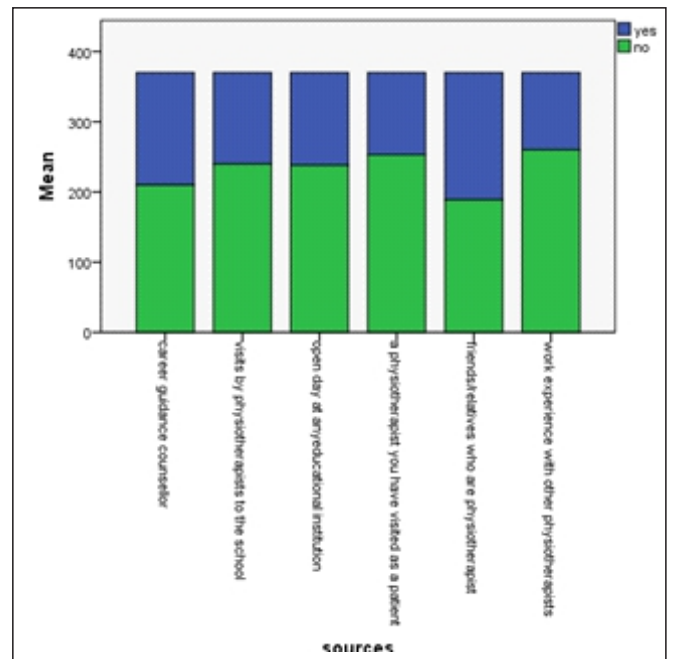
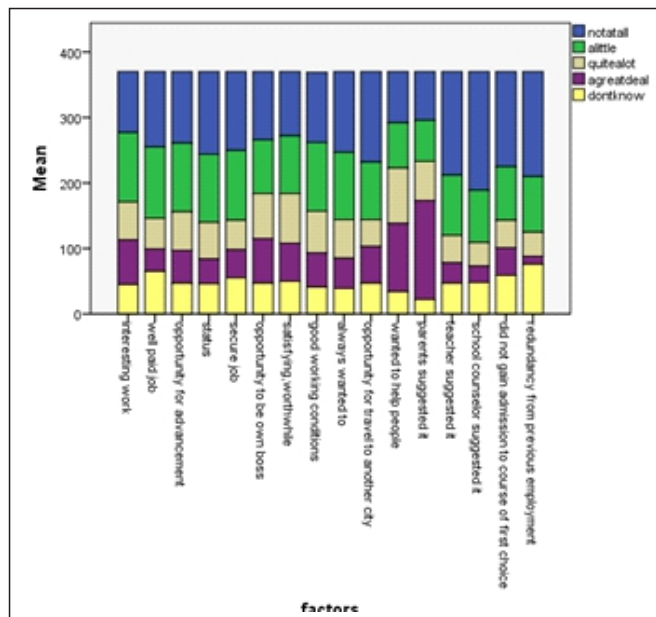


Figure 2: Distribution of subjects' responses on basis of sources while choosing DPT course

DISCUSSIONS:

The purpose of this study was to determine why students enrolled in DPT and to find out the sources of advice students used to get enrolled in physiotherapy. The factor that most predisposed the career choice of students while choosing DPT was suggestions of parents and major source of information and advice given by friends or relatives occur mostly in this research. These findings were in accordance to the findings of a study in which parental or family involvement is more important than peers, gender, print media, economic or social, and other variables in career selection. Similarly, parent's education has been proven as a factor influencing career decision. Earlier studies showed that parents expressed their reservations and concerns in the stage of making a career choice. A previous study showed that the parent's influence as most significant factor and current study shows interconnected outcome with prior studies.(Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017)

In current study, family commitments also played a considerable role in career decisions because students generally tend to choose their profession related to that of their parents. In another similar study, the findings demonstrate that a key factor in undergraduate students' job decisions was their family. Students typically pick careers that are like those of their parents. The findings also demonstrate that birth parents' influence on job choices or preferences were more pronounced than that of their relatives.(Amani & Mkumbo, 2018)

The above findings are because there is a lack of career counseling in our country Pakistan which plays a very vital role in career choices of students as a previous study was conducted for betterment of influencing factors used to affect career choice of pupils. The study recommends

that peer education should be emphasized in schools since students would be equipped with the proper knowledge and information on career choice. In addition, all schools should put in place effective career guidance and counseling departments. The teacher-counselors should also be in-serviced on issues related to career choice. This will help the students to have more self-confidence on the career guidance services provide in schools and thus assist them to make proper decisions when selecting their career. (Kimiti & Maria, 2012)

Current study's findings showed that the factor 'interesting work' indicates least influence on students while enrolling in DPT. Previous study showed results that students' profession choice preferences were impacted or driven by their areas of interest. Considering the importance of selecting the appropriate profession, it is essential that people are aware of the variables that affect such significant decisions and act from a position of awareness. The study concludes that a person's profession choice decisions or options are heavily affected by their student interest. (Nyamwange, 2016)

CONCLUSION:

Current study found that the reason given most frequently and influenced the decision of the students while enrolling in course of doctor of physical therapy were suggestions of parents. Desire to help people, interesting work and satisfying job were also important factors to many students while choosing DPT. Most students had learned about physiotherapy via family members or close friends who were physiotherapists. Counselors were a source of knowledge about physiotherapy as well as a factor in the career decision. Most of the students that enrolled did so because they had a relatively clear concept of where the course would take them; however, the other students had no information or understanding of their course.

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