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# Awareness of physiotherapy in adults dwelling in Pune city

**Dr. Neha Ghugare and Dr. Sana Lalkate**

### Abstract

**Objective:** to find out awareness of the term physiotherapy in general population, whether people are aware of the treatment options available in physiotherapy and what conditions are treatable with physiotherapy, identify the sources of information for physiotherapy in general population.

**Method:** Study design was a cross sectional study. It was a community based survey. A questionnaire containing closed ended questions on awareness of physiotherapy was formulated. Participants were asked to fill up the questionnaire after a written consent.

**Result:** 70% people have heard about physiotherapy and 30% are unaware about the term physiotherapy. 63.66% people are aware about physiotherapy treatment options, and 34.66% are unaware of them. Out of 63.66% who are aware about physiotherapy treatment options, 25% know about Hot packs, 0.33% people are aware about IFT, TENS and EMS no one has heard about. 33.33% have heard about physiotherapy from doctors and 14% from have heard from relatives.

**Conclusion:** People are aware about the term physiotherapy. People aren't aware about the treatment options available in physiotherapy and what all diseases can be treated with physiotherapy apart from orthopedics conditions.

**Keywords:** Physical therapy, society, individuals, treatment, health, disease

### Introduction

Disease was present when man appeared on the earth. The treatment of health disease is an age old process to relieve pain, discomfort and restoration of health. In other words, the treatment of disease is an expansion of life and increase of human capacity, physical, mental and social well-being which we seek to ensure<sup>[1]</sup>.

Physiotherapy is a health care profession. It is an art of science of using physical agents such as heat, cold, light, electric stimulation, electromagnetic waves, Manual therapy and mechanical forces for physical diagnosis and treatment.

Physiotherapy is concerned with identifying and maximizing movement potential, within the spheres of promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. The practice of physiotherapy shouldn't be defined by the use of modalities but rather the Integration of examination, history and analysis of movement dysfunction.

Physiotherapy is used in wide variety of disease conditions like musculoskeletal problems (joint pain, stiff shoulder, low back pain etc.), neurological disorders (stroke, Parkinson, cerebral palsy etc.), sport injuries (ACL injuries, shoulder impingement syndrome etc.), geriatric injuries, burn injuries and rehabilitation of patients in Intensive care unit<sup>[1]</sup>.

Physiotherapy is not merely the science and art of healing, but it has 4 distinct features namely-

- Promotion of health
- Prevention of illness
- Restoration of health
- Rehabilitation services

According to Jackson's in 2004 lack of knowledge about profession may lead to misconception and inter profession conflicts. Patients are always referred by medical professionals to physiotherapist. Therefore improvement in profession should be made to such an extent that people visit physiotherapist directly without any reference.

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Physiotherapy is as old as medicine itself. Hippocrates, the father of medicine used the massage therapy as a treatment and from there the history of physiotherapy was begun. Since then, physiotherapy has evolved from simple massage to a complex portfolio of therapy.

Health status improves with the standard of profession which is directly proportional to the effective education of the students. Level of profession is of high quality in both teaching and treating which is maintained throughout.

There are rising number of physiotherapists and around 25,000 students enroll in physiotherapy colleges across India every year in spite of which very little is known about physiotherapy and its practice. One of the reasons for the slow development is the lack of statistical data on physiotherapy educational standards.

Therefore, it is crucial to explore Physiotherapy awareness and understand positive and negative aspect of it from student's perspective.

### Materials And Methodology

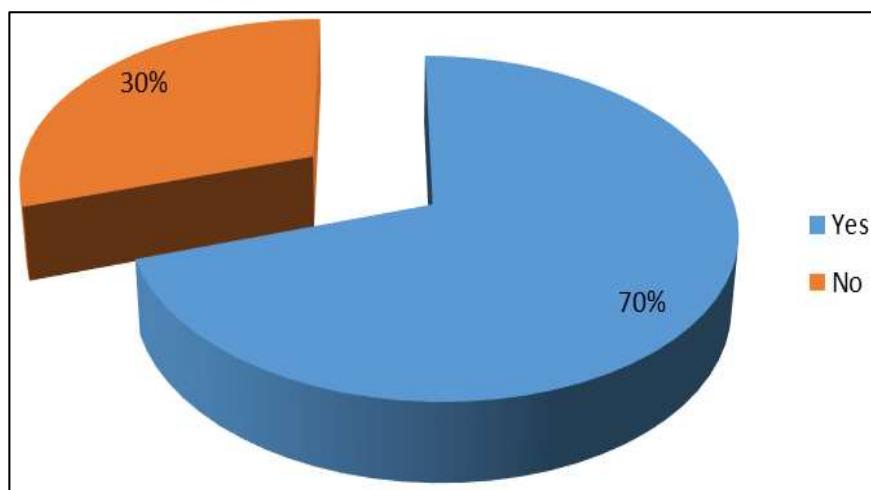
The study was done to find out the awareness of physiotherapy in adults dwelling in Pune city in both males and female, age above 18 years. The objectives of the study

were to find awareness of the term physiotherapy in general population, whether people are aware of the treatment options available in physiotherapy and what conditions are treatable with physiotherapy, identify the sources of information for physiotherapy in general population . Study design was a cross sectional study. It as a community based survey. Ethical clearance was taken from the institutional ethical committee before the commencement of work and the study was carried out for six months. A convenient sampling method was used for current study. Sample size was 300. The outcome measures used for the study were direct interviews and self design Questionnaire.

### Procedure

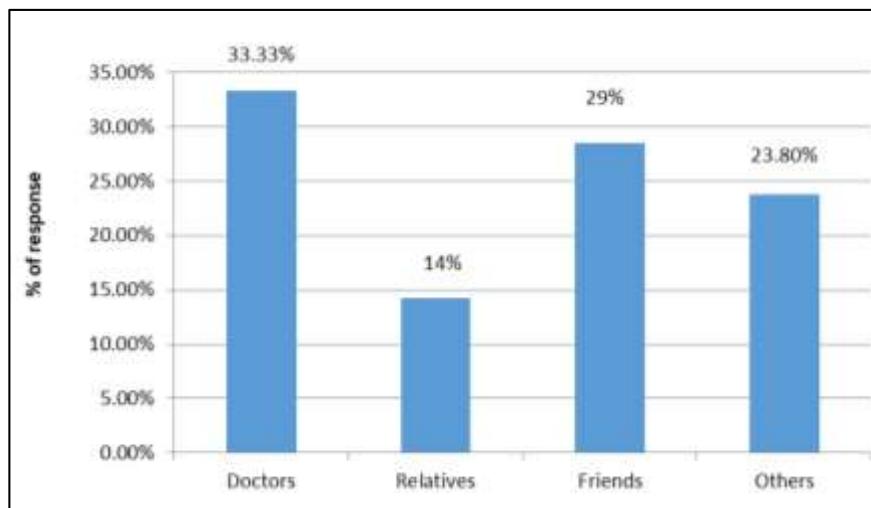
A questionnaire containing closed ended questions on awareness of physiotherapy was formulated. A pilot study was done and the questionnaire was reframed according to the results. Participants were asked to fill up the questionnaire after a written consent. The information so obtained was documented and then the data was analyzed.

### Result



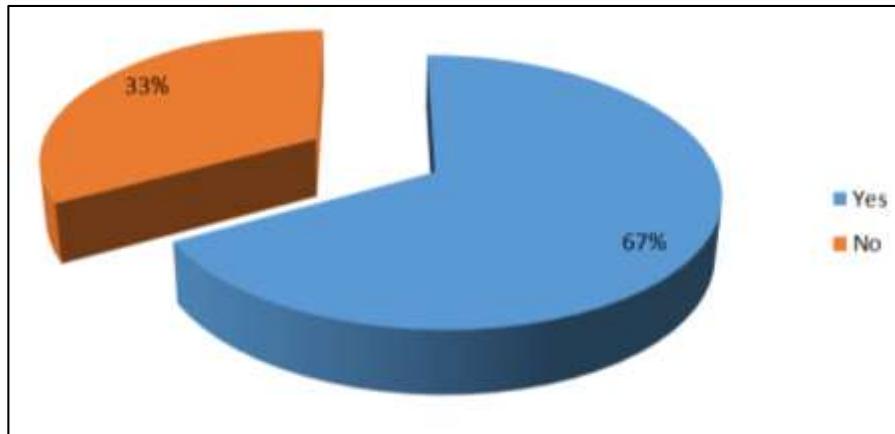
**Graph 1:** Heard about Physiotherapy

Graph 1 shows 70% people have heard about physiotherapy and 30% are unaware about the term physiotherapy.

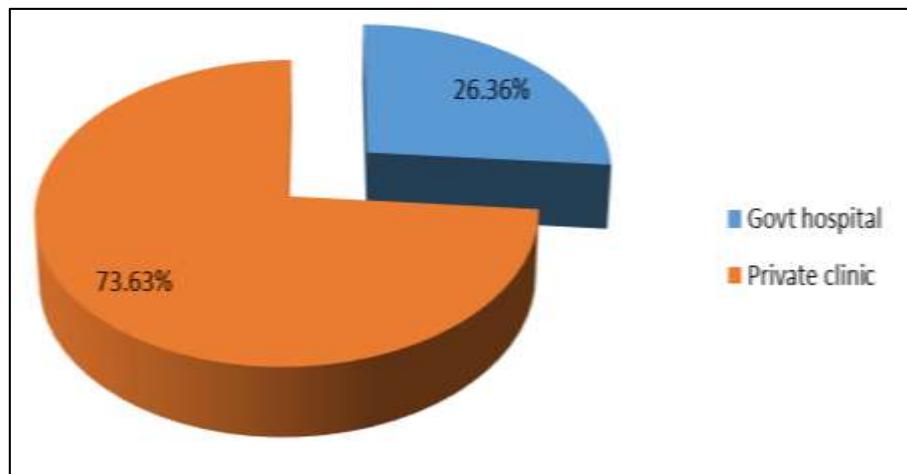


**Graph 2:** Heard From where

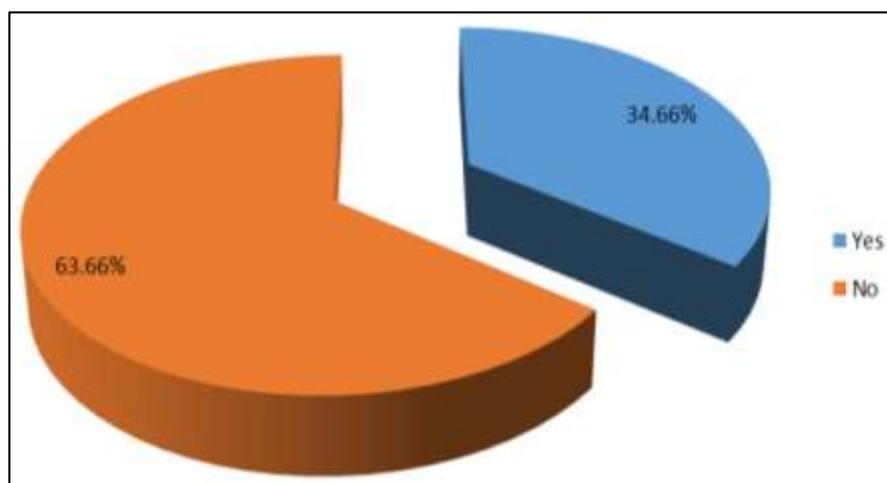
Graph 2 shows 33.33% have heard about physiotherapy from doctors and 14% from relatives.

**Graph 3:** Taken Physiotherapy treatment

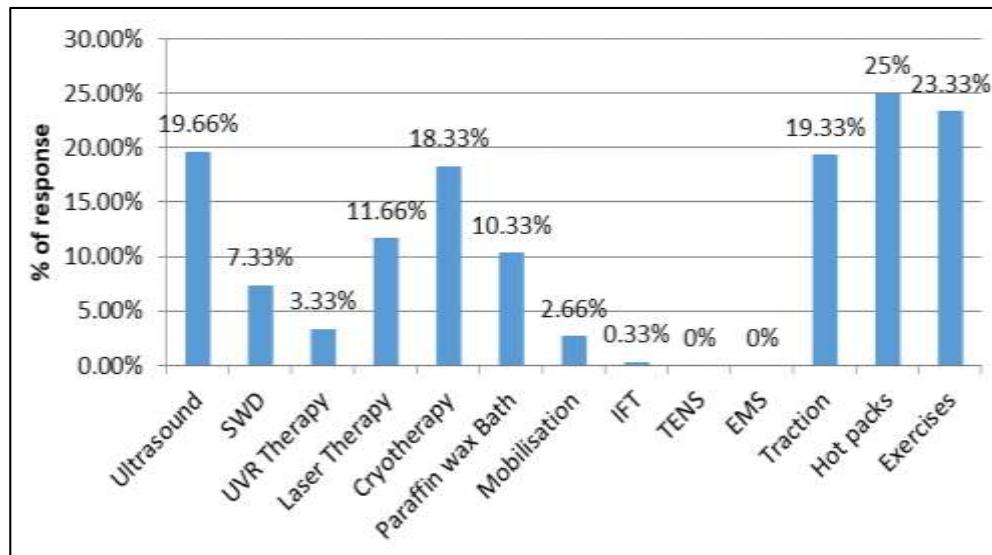
In above graph, 67% people have taken physiotherapy treatment, 33% of them haven't taken physiotherapy treatment.

**Graph 4:** Taken Physiotherapy treatment from where

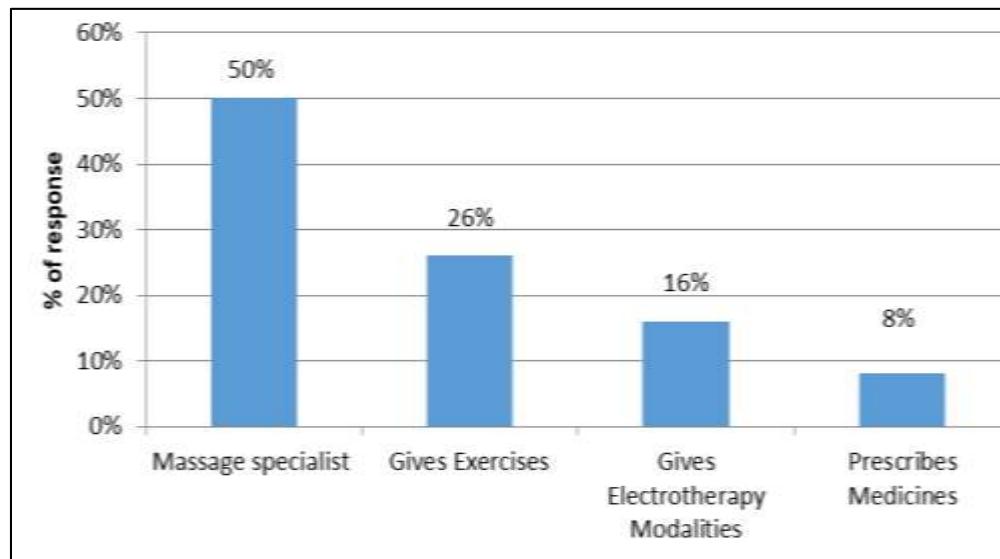
Out of 67% who have taken physiotherapy treatment, 73.66% of people have taken physiotherapy from private clinic, and 26.36% from government setup.

**Graph 5:** Aware about treatment options

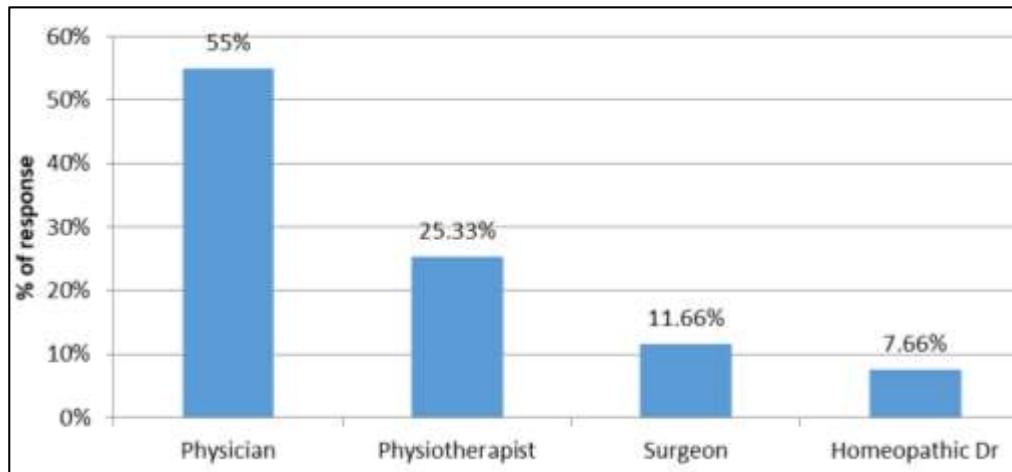
In above graph, 63.66% people are aware about physiotherapy treatment options, and 34.66% are unaware of them.

**Graph 6:** Treatment options

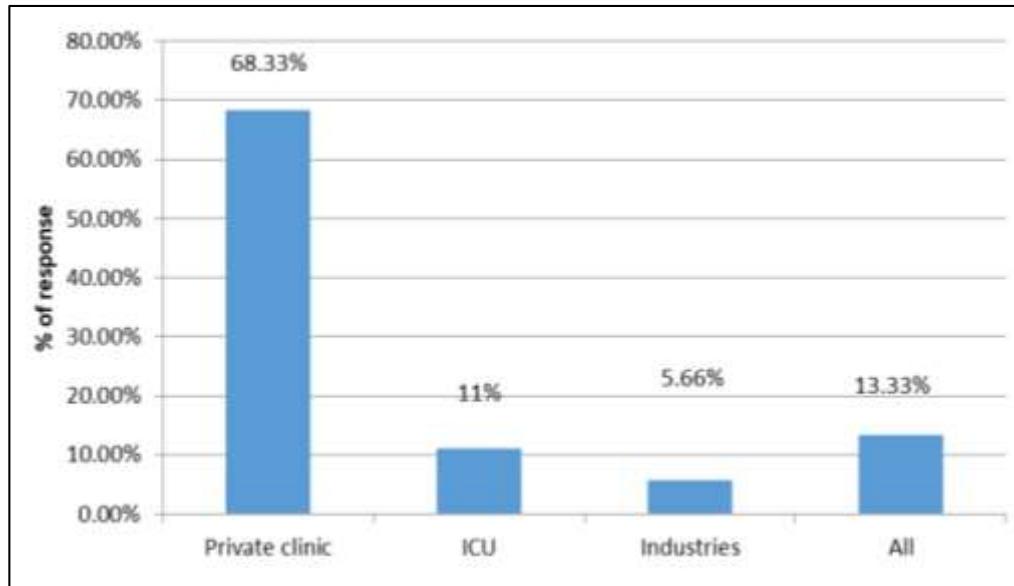
Out of 63.66% who are aware about physiotherapy treatment options, 25% know about Hot packs, 0.33% people are aware about IFT, TENS and EMS no one has heard about.

**Graph 7:** A Physiotherapists job is

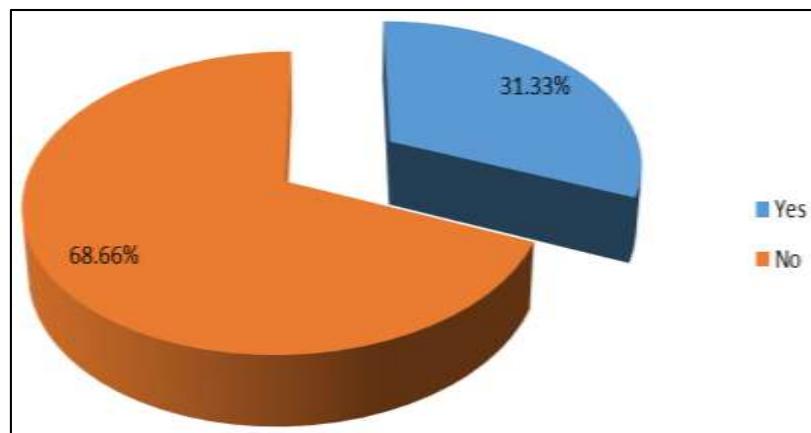
Above graph shows, 50% people think that a physiotherapist's job is that of massage, that means a physiotherapist is a massage specialist and 8% think physiotherapist prescribes medicines.

**Graph 8:** In pain whom would you refer to

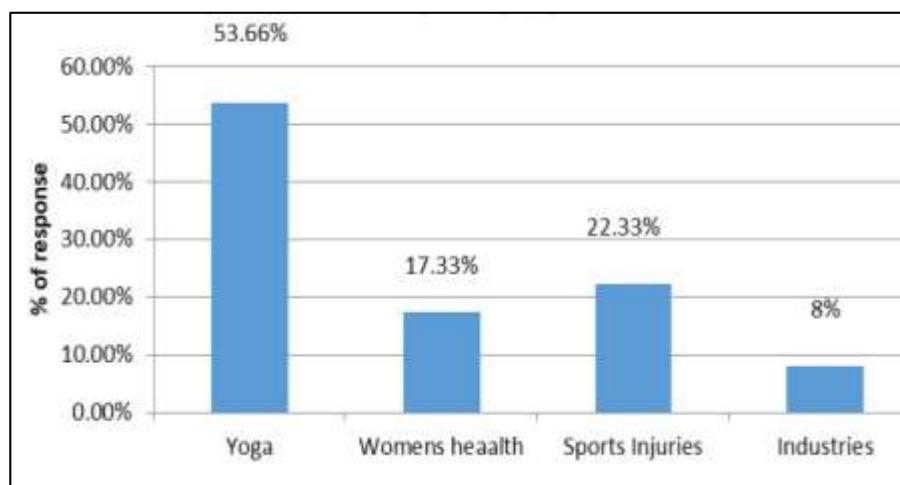
Above graph shows, in case of pain, 55% people would refer a physician first and 7.66% would refer a Homeopathic doctor.

**Graph 9:** A Physiotherapist can work in

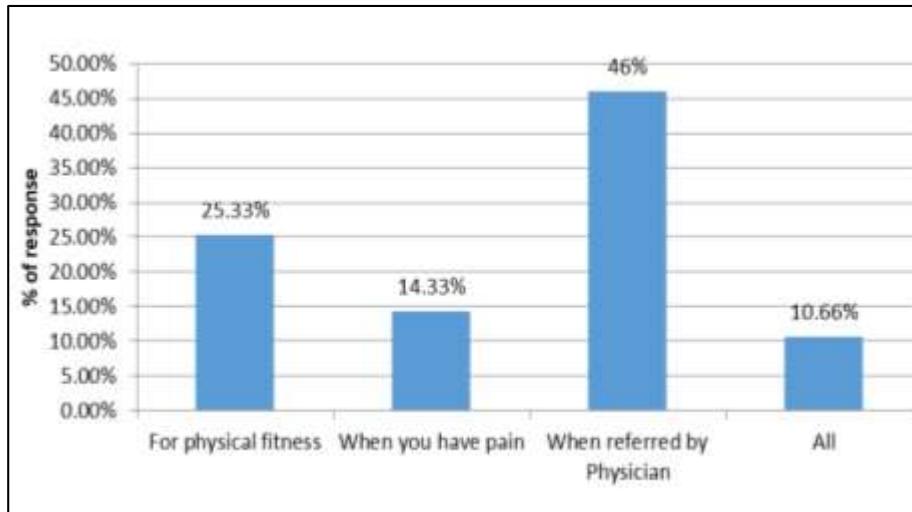
In this graph, 68.33% people think a physiotherapist can work in a private set up and 5.66% know about industrial aspect of physiotherapy.

**Graph 10:** Is Physiotherapy an independent field

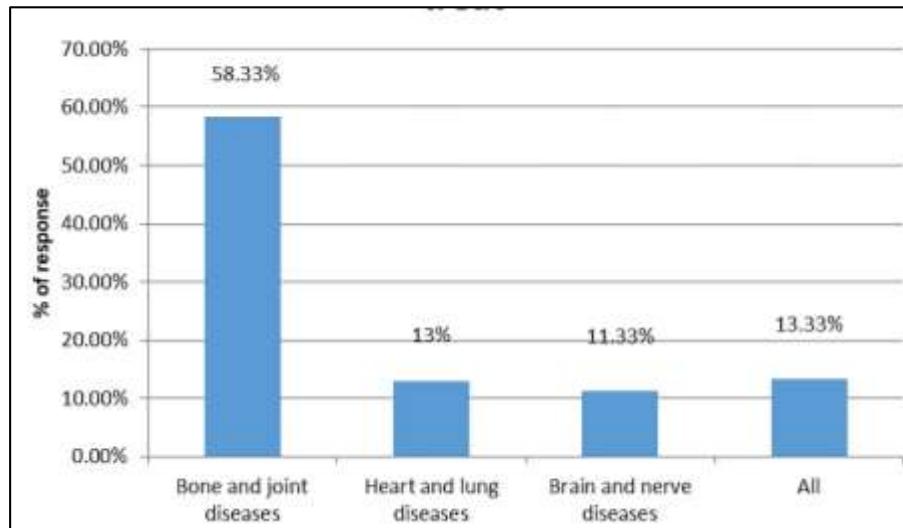
The above graph shows 31.33% people think physiotherapy is an independent field whereas 68.66% think it is not an independent field.

**Graph 11:** A Physiotherapist has a role in full fields

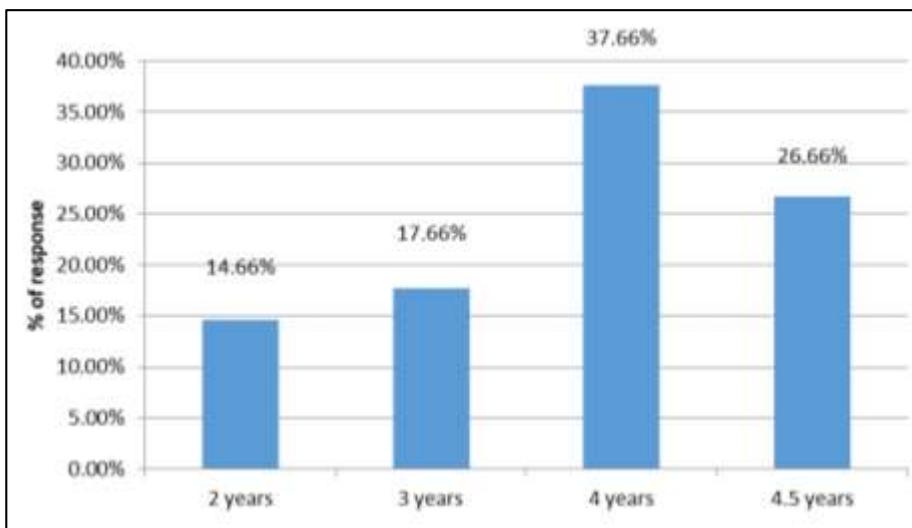
Graph 11 shows that 56.66% think that physiotherapists have most of its role in Yoga and only 8% are aware about its role Industries.

**Graph 12:** When do you approach a Physiotherapist

This graph shows 46% would refer a physiotherapist only when they are referred by a physician, 10.66% would refer in all cases to a physiotherapist.

**Graph 13:** Diseases a Physiotherapist can treat

In the above graph, 58.33% people are aware that a physiotherapist can treat bone and joint diseases and 11.33% in brain and nerve diseases

**Graph 14:** Duration of Physiotherapy course

Out of 100%, 37.66% people think physiotherapy is a 4 year course and 14.66% think it is a 2 year course.

## Discussion

In graph 1, Out of total subjects, 70% have heard about physiotherapy, and 30% subjects were unaware about the profession. Physiotherapy as a profession is gaining new horizons with its recent advances and evidence based practice. In less than a century, the profession of physical therapy has evolved rapidly, extending the scope of its functions, treatments and settings [2].

In graph 2, Majority of people have heard about physiotherapy from doctors. Majority of doctors feel physiotherapy as a part of health care system form an integral part in reducing hospital stay, quick recovery and in rehab for a better quality life [3].

In this study in graph 4, majority of subjects have taken physiotherapy treatment from private set ups.

With the limitations of basic health care services in the government sector, physiotherapy has been neglected and never been given priority [4].

In Graph 6 shows that maximum people are aware about Ultrasound, Cryotherapy, Hot packs, Exercises, Traction. The probable reason behind hot packs and cryotherapy is its use from ancient times and its wide use for pain relief even today. The study by Prati and Liu also demonstrated that the most commonly recognized interventions used by PT were exercise, massages, electrical stimulations and ultrasound. The study conducted in Australia also showed similar results that the public was generally aware of massage, exercise, heat [5].

Majority of subjects think physiotherapists are specialized massage therapists, and 26% people are aware of our domain being in exercise prescription seen in graph 7.

The study by Prati and Liu also demonstrated that the most commonly recognized interventions used by PT were exercise, massages, electrical stimulations and ultrasound 19. The study conducted in Australia also showed similar results that the public was generally aware of massage, exercise, heat [5].

In Graph 8, Also majority of subjects prefer to refer a physician if they have pain anywhere in the body, i.e is 55% and only 25% people would have a direct referral to a physiotherapist in case of pain. Physiotherapists can start treating only if a doctor prescribes physiotherapy for a patient” [6].

Also there is lack of awareness about whether physiotherapists can work in ICU and industries, i.e around 11% and 6% respectively whereas 68% people think a physiotherapist can just work in a private setup seen in graph 9. There was little awareness that PT provided special care for women and children. The precise role that physiotherapists play in the ICU varies considerably from one unit to another, depending on factors such as the country in which the ICU is located, local tradition, staffing levels, training and expertise [3].

In this study in graph 10, 69% of people think that physiotherapy is not an independent field, and it requires a referral from a medical practitioner.

“Physiotherapists are merely paramedical staff and they are not fully qualified doctors. In fact, they can start treating only if a doctor prescribes physiotherapy for a patient” [6].

In Graph 12, Plotting this on a graph shows that 46% people would refer a physiotherapist only if they are referred to a physiotherapist by some medical practitioner, 25% would refer for physical fitness and 14% would when they have pain. The existing literature about public familiarity with physiotherapist shows that the few people are aware of it,

but most of them lack complete awareness, understanding and knowledge of the profession [3].

In Graph 13, Awareness about diseases a physiotherapist can treat is significantly poor. 58% of the subjects are of the opinion that a physiotherapist can treat only bone and joint diseases, whereas heart and lung diseases shows around 13% followed by brain and nerve diseases of about 11%, and very less that's 13% people think a physiotherapist can treat all the above mentioned diseases. This is because in everyday life people face a lot of joint problems in their daily living task for example, any joint pain or muscle pain. Thus, the reason for more awareness could be that the people mostly commonly experience more of orthopedic problems. And reason for less awareness about heart and lung diseases and brain and nerve diseases is less referral of patients to physiotherapy by medical professionals in this field. The reasons for less awareness about role of a physiotherapist in different health care sectors is because of less publicity about the profession and less awareness about the advantages of physiotherapy in the above mentioned fields [1].

So from all the above graphs, we understand that people are aware about physiotherapy as a medical profession. But very less people are aware what the profession provides, what treatment options are available in Physiotherapy, what diseases can we treat, and that it is an independent profession, and in fields of medicine, a physiotherapist is required.

So, attempts to spread more and more awareness about physiotherapy regarding its importance in rehabilitation of not only musculoskeletal disorders but also in neurological and cardio respiratory conditions should be emphasized upon. This can be done with the help of regular camps, free health services etc.

## Conclusion

People are aware about the term physiotherapy. People aren't aware about the treatment options available in physiotherapy and what all diseases can be treated with physiotherapy apart from orthopedics conditions. In general population, mainly the source of knowledge about physiotherapy are medical professionals referring patients to physiotherapy, apart from that articles, newspapers, magazines etc, and also next source of information is friends and colleagues.

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