

# **Awareness of physiotherapy as a treatment for urinary incontinence among mothers with pregnancy-related urinary incontinence at two main women's hospitals in Colombo District**

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Urinary incontinence (UI) is a common condition occurring in pregnancy. Despite the global recognition of physiotherapy in managing pregnancy-related urinary incontinence (PRUI), there is a paucity of context-specific evidence regarding its effectiveness in Sri Lanka. This study aimed to determine awareness, knowledge, and attitude toward physiotherapy for pregnancy-related UI among women with PRUI at two main maternity hospitals in Colombo District. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 100 pregnant women in 3rd trimester diagnosed with PRUI at Castle Street Hospital for Women (Teaching) and De Soysa Hospital for Women, Colombo. Data were collected through interviewer-administrated questionnaires, including a sociodemographic and UI diagnosis questionnaire, a self-developed questionnaire to determine awareness, knowledge, and attitude toward physiotherapy for PRUI. Descriptive statistics and inferential analysis were performed using the SPSS software. Among the 100 participants, majority were between 25 and 35 years old and 58% were housewives while 53%, 39%, and 8% had mild, moderate, and severe UI, respectively. The severity of UI was significantly associated with role limitation, physical limitation, emotional well-being, personal relationships, and quality of sleep ( $p < 0.05$ ). Among them, only 24% had heard of physiotherapy, just 14% were aware of pelvic floor muscle exercises as a treatment option, and only 6% had gone for physiotherapy, indicating a concerning lack of awareness. No significant association was found between awareness and sociodemographic factors including age, number of pregnancies, occupation, educational level, and the area of living ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, 88% of participants showed a willingness to attend physiotherapy if they were referred by a doctor. The study reveals that pregnant mothers have low awareness and knowledge about physiotherapy. However, when informed, they have a positive attitude towards physiotherapy and are willing to attend when referred to physiotherapy, suggesting the need for improved awareness and knowledge.

**Keywords:** *Urinary incontinence, Pregnancy, Physiotherapy, Knowledge, Awareness*