

OP-36: Evidence-based practice: attitudes, knowledge and behaviours of Sri Lankan physiotherapists

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Introduction: Evidence-based practice (EBP) is a globally accepted model of clinical decision making, which is considered a gold standard in clinical practice by many health professionals, including physiotherapists. Access to evidence, having positive attitudes and beliefs, and overcoming barriers are critical factors in implementing EBP to improve patient care. This study describes physiotherapists' self-reported attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and barriers to EBP.

Methods: In a cross-sectional online survey, practising physiotherapists were invited to complete a google form with Likert scales, which measured the required components. Social media platforms were used to circulate the questionnaire to participants. A convenient sampling method was used. Chi-squared test was performed to analyse data.

Results: The majority of 108 participants were females (56.5%). Most of the physiotherapists (63%) belonged to the age group 30-39 years. It was found that 90% of participants had positive attitudes towards EBP. Although 89.8% of participants had learnt EBP during their academic programmes, complete awareness of the terminology of EBP was poor. More participants (57.4%) revealed that they received support to use current research in their practice, but 51% did not have access to current research. Insufficient time was the main barrier for practising EBP (26%) in clinical settings. Implementing EBP in their clinical practice was low (74%) despite training during their academic programme.

Conclusions: It is noted that there was a lack of implementation of EBP, even though participants had a positive attitude towards EBP. Based on results, it is recommended to have a national level policy to enhance EBP in physiotherapy clinical practice in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: evidence-based practice, physiotherapy, evidence-based healthcare