

A Survey of physiotherapy student's expectations from Physiotherapy as their future profession.

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Abstract:Physiotherapy is a branch of modern medical science which includes examination, assessment, interpretation, physical diagnosis, planning and execution of treatment and advice to any person for the purpose of preventing, correcting, alleviating and limiting dysfunction, acute and chronic bodily malfunction including life saving measures. This study was done on 200 physiotherapy students among which 187 participated in the study. Method: Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire that included demographic details and questions related to career expectations. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed. Majority of students chose physiotherapy due to interest in the healthcare field (54.5%), while a small proportion reported external influences such as parental pressure. Most students opted to become skilled professionals (77%) and expressed satisfaction with their career choice (90.9%). However, concerns regarding career success and limited interest in research or academic roles were observed. The study highlights the need for improved career guidance, mentorship, and awareness about diverse opportunities in physiotherapy. These findings have implications for curriculum development and student mental support systems in higher education.

Keywords: physiotherapy education, student expectations, career choice, healthcare profession, higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Physiotherapy is a branch of modern medical science which includes examination, assessment, interpretation, physical diagnosis, planning and execution of treatment and advice to any person for the purpose of preventing, correcting, alleviating and limiting dysfunction, acute and chronic bodily malfunction including life saving measures. Physiotherapy is a dynamic healthcare profession that integrates clinical expertise with scientific knowledge to improve patient outcomes. It involves assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, and rehabilitation of individuals with physical impairments. As healthcare systems evolve, physiotherapists play an increasingly important role in multidisciplinary care.

Students pursuing physiotherapy often enter the field with varied expectations. These expectations are influenced by personal motivation, societal perception, and academic exposure. Over time, clinical training and educational experiences reshape these expectations,

ultimately influencing career decisions. Understanding students' expectations is essential for improving educational strategies and aligning academic programs with professional demands. It also helps institutions identify gaps in training and provide better support systems for students.

Expectations for students pursuing physiotherapy education change as they advance through academic and clinical training, preparing them for a future in healthcare as professionals. After their experiences in the classroom and in the clinical setting, first-year to intern physiotherapy students frequently have different ideas about what they want to do for a living and how wide the scope of physiotherapy is in their future. The physiotherapy curriculum covers assessment, planning, treatment, management, communication skills towards patients to help them solve their medical conditions. And how these students perceive physiotherapy and their thoughts towards the profession from first year to being interns for their future. The physiotherapy curriculum aims to develop competent professionals with clinical and interpersonal skills. However, students' perceptions of their future profession may change during their academic journey. Limited research has explored these changing expectations, particularly in the Indian context.

Additionally, there is a growing need to understand whether students are aware of diverse career opportunities such as research, academia, and specialization. Identifying these gaps can help improve curriculum design and career guidance initiatives.

AIM & OBJECTIVES

The study aims to explore physiotherapy student's expectations from physiotherapy as their future profession. The study objectives are to determine satisfaction with career choice, to identify motivation to choose physiotherapy, to assess career aspirations amongst students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Study Design - Cross sectional survey study

Sample Design - convenient sampling

Study Setup: TMV's Lokmanya Tilak College of Physiotherapy, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai.

Sample Size – 200 physiotherapy students were approached and 187 participated.

Outcome Measure - a online self administered questionnaire.

Study Subject- Physiotherapy students of TMV's Lokmanya Tilak college of physiotherapy, Navi Mumbai.

Duration Of Study - 6 Months

Data Collection Tool: A online Google form will be given to all physiotherapy students from TMV's Lokmanya Tilak college of physiotherapy, Navi Mumbai.

INCLUSION CRITERIA:

1. Qualified physiotherapy Intern who have passed final year BPTH University examination.
2. First, second, third and fourth BPTH students.
3. Students who failed in the subsequent year will also be included.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA:

1. Not willing to participate.

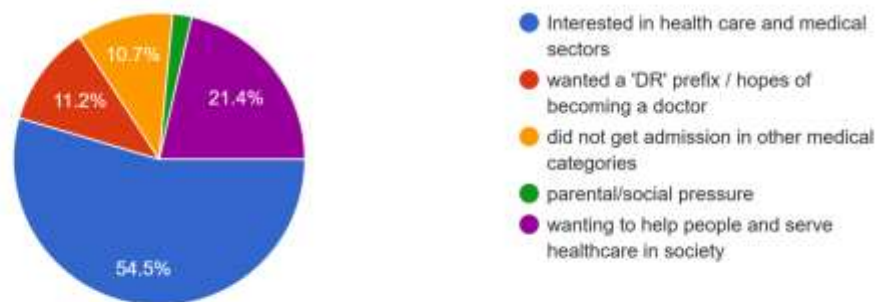
DATA ANALYSIS: Descriptive Statistic was applied to the demographic data and the questionnaire score. Mean, SD and range will be determine for predictive variable.

In our study out of 200 students, 187 students responded and filled the form. All 187 students have given consent to participate in the study. In those 187, 154 are female students and 33 are male students. 62 students are in range of 18-20 years of age, 108 students are in range of 21-23 age and 17 students range between 24-26 age. Distribution of students in their academic year: 45 students from 1st bpth, 37 students from 2nd bpth, 35 from 3rd bpth, 46 students of 4th bpth and 24 intern students.

GRAPH1: Motivation to choose the profession.

Motivation to choose this profession

187 responses

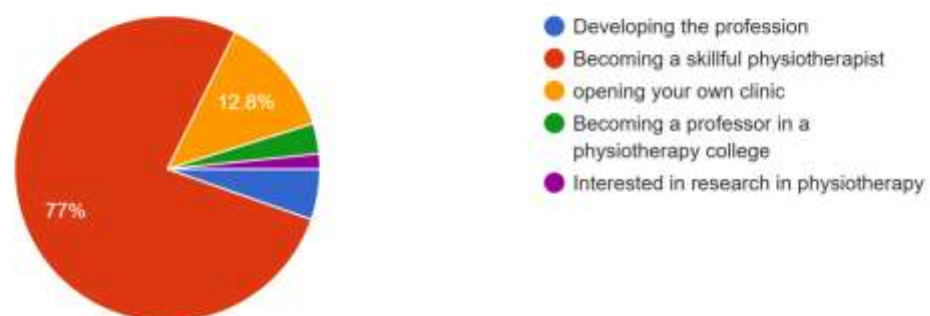


Graph1: interpretation:Motivation to choose this profession: 54.5% students have opted interested in health and medical sectors while 2,1% have opted parental/social pressure.

GRAPH2: What are your expectations after choosing physiotherapy as your profession?

what are your expectations after choosing physiotherapy as your profession?

187 responses

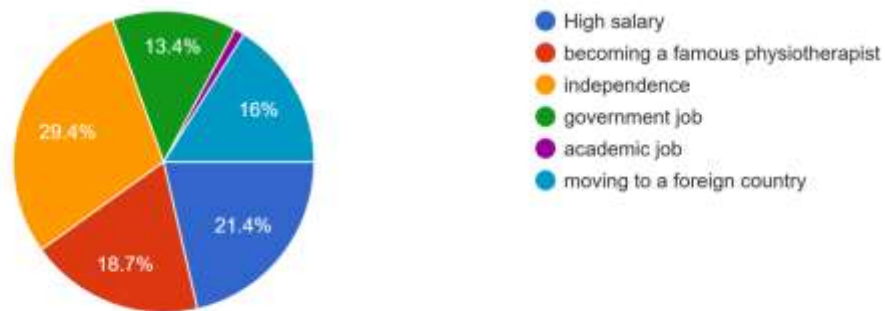


Graph2: interpretation:77% students opted becoming a skillful physiotherapist and 1.6% opted interested in research in physiotherapy.

GRAPH3: Future expectations in career after becoming a physiotherapist.

Future expectations in career after becoming a physiotherapist

187 responses



Graph3: interpretation: 29.4% want to be independent and 1.1% want to percuse a academic job.

GRAPH4: What obstacles do you think you will face while building a career as a physiotherapist?

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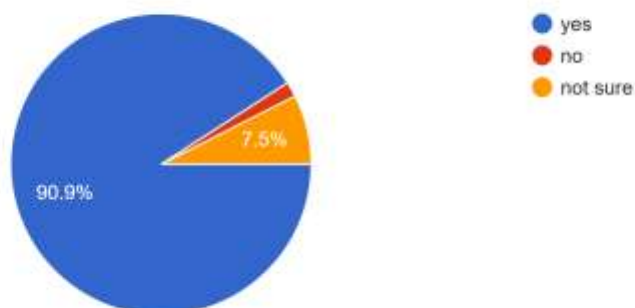
187 responses



Graph 4: interpretation: 27.8% are thinking if they can become successful in their career as a physiotherapist and 1.6% think they don't have much guidance by their teachers.

GRAPH5: Are you happy/satisfied after choosing physiotherapy as your future profession or as your identity?

Are you happy/satisfied after choosing physiotherapy as your future profession or as your identity?
187 responses



Graph 5: interpretation: 90.9% of students are happy choosing physiotherapy as a career and 1.6% of students are not happy choosing physiotherapy as a career.

RESULTS

In this study out of 187 participants:154 females and 33 males.Age group distribution of the 187 students are: 18–20 years: 62 students 21–23 years: 108 students 24–26 years: 17 students.Academic Distribution1st year: 45 students, 2nd year: 37 students, 3rd year: 35 students, 4th year: 46 students and Interns: 24. questions asked and their results:Motivation for Choosing PhysiotherapyInterest in healthcare: 54.5% Parental/social pressure: 2%.Career AspirationsBecoming skilled physiotherapists: 77% Interest in research: 1.6% .Career PreferencesIndependent practice: 29.4% Academic roles: minimal.Perception of Success27.8% uncertain about career success, Few reported lack of guidance Satisfaction90.9% satisfied 1.6% dissatisfied.

DISCUSSION

In our study out of 200 students, 187 students responded and filled the form.All 187 students have given consent to participate in the study. In those 187,154 are female students and 33b are male students.62 students are in range of 18-20 years of age,108 students are in range of 21-23 age and 17 students range between 24-26 age.Distribution of students in their academic year: 45 students from 1st bpth,37 students from 2nd bpth, 35 from 3rd bpth, 46 students of 4th bpth and 24 intern students.The results indicate that intrinsic motivation plays a significant role in

career selection among physiotherapy students. This aligns with previous studies showing that personal interest enhances professional commitment and satisfaction⁴.

The strong preference for clinical practice reflects the practical nature of physiotherapy education. However, the limited interest in research suggests a gap in academic exposure. Encouraging research participation is essential for evidence-based practice and professional advancement⁵. Students' uncertainty about career success highlights the need for mentorship and career counseling. Educational institutions must provide structured guidance to help students navigate career pathways effectively. The demographic distribution of participants, with a higher proportion of female students, reflects the gender trend commonly observed in physiotherapy education. This may have implications for workforce dynamics and career preferences, as previous studies have suggested gender differences in career aspirations and work-life balance considerations³.

The study also indirectly reflects the broader context of higher education, where students are increasingly seeking careers that offer both personal fulfillment and professional stability. Physiotherapy, as a healthcare profession, meets these expectations to a considerable extent. However, the limited awareness of diverse career pathways such as research, academia, sports physiotherapy, and rehabilitation sciences indicates a gap in career orientation programs.

Overall, the study highlights the need for a more holistic approach to physiotherapy education that balances clinical training with research exposure, career guidance, and professional development. Institutions must adopt strategies that not only enhance technical skills but also broaden students' perspectives regarding the scope of the profession. Integrating workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs can help students make informed career decisions and reduce uncertainty about their future.

IMPLICATIONS

For Institutions: Introduce career guidance programs, Promote research and academic exposure, Strengthen mentorship systems. For Students: Explore diverse career options, Engage in research activities, Develop long-term career planning. For Curriculum Development: Include research methodology training, Provide exposure to specialization areas, Encourage interdisciplinary learning.

CONCLUSION

Physiotherapy students demonstrate high motivation and satisfaction with their chosen profession. However, limited awareness of alternative career pathways and uncertainty about future success indicate the need for improved educational support. Strengthening mentorship, research exposure, and career guidance can enhance student preparedness and contribute to the growth of the profession.

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