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Awareness, Perceptions and Beliefs About Physiotherapy Profession Among Orthopedists and Neurosurgeons Working in the Main Hospitals of the Ministry of Health in Gaza Strip

Omar O. Alnajjar, Ahmed M. Abo Musabeh, Khald I. Hussain, Ismail K. Al Qedra, Abdallah Hamdona.

Physiotherapy Department – The Islamic University of Gaza.

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Background:

- Healthcare professions have rapidly developed due to advancements in technology along with innovations over years, and Physiotherapists are considered as a key-member of collaborative inter-professional teams due to their broad scope of practice.
- Increasing disabilities in Palestine due to occupation and other reasons, life expectancy and the special circumstances made it one of the most imperative socioeconomic medical issues in Gaza Strip. This emphasizes the need for the development and recognition of physiotherapy in multidisciplinary healthcare structures.
- In order to deliver effective care, communication, cooperation and agreement between physicians and physiotherapist is essential.
- If a physician were well informed about physiotherapy abilities in helping the treatments, prevent complications and decrease hospital stays, that would decrease the burden on the healthcare system.
- Lack of knowledge about physiotherapy among medical professionals affects several aspects, including patients, the role of physiotherapy as a part of the healthcare teams, and the outcomes.

Objectives:

- The aim of the study was to identify awareness, perception and believes about physiotherapy among orthopedists and neurosurgeons.

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E-mail: research@admin.alquds.edu

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Methods:

- A cross-sectional study was conducted between January – June 2019 at the three main hospitals of the Ministry of Health in Gaza Strip. The study population included Orthopedists and Neurosurgeons who work according to the settings.
- The total collected samples were 67, and participants of the study were recruited through a Non-Probability convenience sample.
- Data was collected through a questionnaire, that was designed in English, with four main parts, a total of 30 items, then data analysis using the (SPSS-V.22) and several statistical operations were done including Cross tabulation using chi-squared with significance value was defined as $p \leq 0.05$.

Results:

- Results of this study showed that the awareness of orthopedists and neurosurgeons about physiotherapy was 95.5%. The study showed that 54.7% of these physicians received their knowledge through their studying. The study showed that 78.1% of physicians believe that the intervention of physiotherapy is in therapeutic exercises, while 57.8% believe that the biggest intervention is the use of electrical modalities, and 60.9% believe that it is manual therapy. The study found that 96.9% of physicians believe that physiotherapy plays an important role in the treatment plan for the patient. And 71.9% of the physicians believe that the physiotherapist has the right to return the patient to the physician due to misdiagnosis. The study indicated that 90.6% of physicians believe it is important to discuss the patient's discharge with a physiotherapist, and shocking result was that 95.3% of physicians say that they write on the referral what should a physiotherapist do to a patient, and that is a huge violation of the physiotherapist's right of making their own decision.

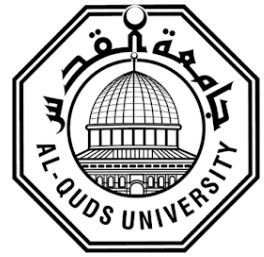
Conclusions:

- There is a close association between orthopedists and neurosurgeons about physiotherapy. The study has shown that they have a clear awareness, perception and beliefs about physiotherapy.
- This relationship should be supported and developed to provide the best possible treatment to patients.



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Key words: Awareness, Physiotherapy, Orthopedist, Neurosurgeon, MOH, Gaza Strip.

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