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Knowledge, attitudes, and barriers towards evidence based practice among government sector physiotherapists in Sri Lanka

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Background: Evidenced Based Practice (EBP) is defined as integrating the best available research findings with clinical expertise and patient’s preferences. Implementing EBP in hospitals would be useful for the patients as they can receive the best available treatment with the best possible clinical outcomes.

Objective: This study was conducted to assess the level of knowledge and attitudes on EBP and to identify the barriers for implementing EBP among physiotherapists working in government hospitals in Sri Lanka.

Method: A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted among 264 physiotherapists in 39 government hospitals in Sri Lanka in 2019. A pre-tested, validated self-administered questionnaire with 24 questions was used to gather information on knowledge, attitudes, and barriers. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences University of Peradeniya. Five points Likert scale was used to evaluate Knowledge and attitudes towards EBP. Knowledge was categorized according to marks obtained by the participants.

Results: Two hundred and seventy out of the 452 invited physiotherapists participated in the study and 264 completed their responses (n=108, 40.9% males, n=156, 59.1% females). Among them, 75.8% (14-20) had a good level of knowledge, 22.7% had an average level (7-13)of knowledge, and 1.5% had a poor level (0-6) of knowledge on EBP. Attitudes towards EBP were positive(16-24) among 87.9% of participants. Nearly 40% of the participants concluded that they did not undergo formal training on EBP in their academic careers. The main barriers to implement EBP in Sri Lanka were identified as insufficient resources 26.2%, and lack of time 45.4%.

Conclusion: Physiotherapists in Sri Lanka have a good level of knowledge on EBP and show positive attitudes towards implementing EBP. Need to provide enough human and physical resource to overcome barriers. The study is suggested to conduct continuous professional development programs regularly in the future to encourage implementing EBP among the physiotherapy professionals in Sri Lanka.