

## **Importance of Research in Physical Therapy Rehabilitation**

Professional practice and professionalism are two main characteristics of any independent profession. Every independent profession also has code of ethics to follow during the practice. Currently physical therapy has been considered to be an autonomous profession and the physical therapists are the Doctors of Physical Therapy who are capable to assess and diagnose movement dysfunctions due to disease, injuries or aging process<sup>1</sup>. Like other countries physical therapy is also became an autonomous profession in Pakistan and the entry level degree has been introduced and unified curriculum has been developed by the National Curriculum Revision Committee (NCRC) of Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC)<sup>2</sup>. The development of the profession opened new horizons for the professionals of physical therapy and rehabilitation in Pakistan.

They have an opportunity now to improve their qualifications in many areas of the profession like Neuromuscular Physical Therapy(NMPT), Orthopedic Manual Physical Therapy(OMPT), Cardiovascular & Pulmonary physical therapy (CPPT) and Sports physical Therapy (SPT) etc. They are also eligible to improve their qualification in basic health sciences(Anatomy, physiology, biochemistry and pharmacology ) and in pain management, so today the physical therapist has the ability to lead a rehabilitation team, play the role as a consultant, and also can practice as practitioner of choice. The research in physical therapy and other rehabilitation disciplines provide the basic foundation for specialized practice. The questions and queries in the mind of the professionals about the existing treatment procedures' effectiveness enhance their quest for getting more knowledge and skills in a particular area. Clinical decision making and Clinical reasoning skills helps the clinicians to diagnose movement dysfunction properly which is essential to develop precisely and more effective treatment protocol for the conditions.

The ongoing research in the profession explores the unknown mechanism to know facts and after the validation of the researcher it becomes part of the professional knowledge. The Therapists learn and incorporate the empirical facts into their practice for the betterment of their patients/client. So the aim of specialized practice in physical therapy means to provide evidence based treatment for better outcome. Now a question arises why a person has to focus on one area? A famous saying "practice makes a man perfect". For the Therapist to be master in any skill needs a lot of practice to be perfect and it is possible only when a Therapist focus on specific skills or area of practice. The advantages of the specialized practice are numerous. The main objective is to provide quality care for the patient/client by diagnosing him/her accurately and provide the hands on treatment more precisely and professionally.

The direct access to physical therapy services and specialized practice has been established in the developed world and the scope of specialized practice is very well defined but here in Pakistan it is a new emerging practice in the health care system and not very well defined yet<sup>3</sup>. It is recommended that the scope of specialized physical therapy and other rehabilitation practice has to be defined properly and recognized by the government health officials of the country. In the

public sector hospitals from Basic Health Unit (BHU) to District and Divisional level Hospitals jobs for rehabilitation professionals should be created, so the public will have access to specialized physical therapy care at their local hospitals. The jobs should be created according to international standards which is one Physical Therapist for 15 beds. A Therapist can treat 8 to 10 patients or may be 15/day with the help of **physo** technician /assistant because the therapy session minimum has to be 35 minutes, less than 35 minutes a session cannot be considered as skilled therapy session<sup>4</sup>. We hope that the relevant authorities will pay attention to this very important issue of health care system in the country.

**Dr. Asghar Khan**

Chief Editor (JRCRS) Director

Riphah College of rehabilitation Sciences (RCRS)

Riphah International University Islamabad

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