

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

AWARENESS OF PHYSICAL THERAPY AMONG FOOTBALL CLUB-LEVEL PLAYERS OF KARACHISaad Saleem¹, Varisha Kabir², Sobia Hasan¹, Fahad Farooq Lasi³**ABSTRACT**

Introduction: Physical therapy is a profession which is basically concerned with identifying and maximizing the quality of life (QoL) and movement potentials with the aim of promotion, prevention, intervention, habitation, and rehabilitation of an individual. This encompasses social, psychological, physical, and emotional wellbeing. The importance of the Physical Therapy profession cannot be neglected and ignored, from inpatient rehabilitation to outpatient rehabilitation. It is noteworthy that correct biomechanics provides accurate movement and reduces the risk of injuries, abnormal biomechanics are always a potential cause of non-traumatic sports injury, while poor techniques can cause abnormal biomechanics which contributes to subsequent injuries. This highlights the importance of the profession for athletes. However, there is scarcity of data whether the athletes in our region have a reasonable knowledge of this profession.

Material & Methods: This is an observational, cross-sectional study that was conducted with various Football (Soccer) club-level players in Pakistan. A total of 150 participants were required for this study. Participants were between the ages of 15-35 years, with no physical disability, and co-morbidities. A self-structured questionnaire was used to collect the data.

Results: Data analysis showed that more than 57% of players were aware of Physical Therapy, among which 26% of club level players were informed about Physical Therapy by their Physicians, 14% from friends, 9% from print, electronic media, and 8% from family members. Whereas 43% of players were totally unaware of Physical Therapy. It was also noteworthy that only 10% of players received physical therapy guidance for fitness and ailments.

Conclusion: Physical therapy interventions are evidently the first-line treatment option for injuries related to training and sports. It is the need of the day to raise awareness in our athletes about the scope and importance of physical therapy.

Key Words: awareness, athletes, exercise, physical fitness, sports medicine

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INTRODUCTION

Physical therapy is a profession which is basically concerned with identifying and maximizing the quality of life (QoL) and movement potentials with the aim of promotion, prevention, intervention, habitation, and rehabilitation of an individual. This encompasses social, psychological, physical, and emotional wellbeing.¹ Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) elucidate Physical Therapists (PT) as wellbeing experts, competent of doing an entire subjective and objective examination, evaluating the results, framing a judgment, predicting, identifying and implementing the best treatment plan, thus preserving ideal working and bodily wellness in people.²

The importance of the Physical Therapy profession cannot be neglected and ignored. From inpatient rehabilitation to outpatient rehabilitation, PT always plays a crucial role to enhance the QoL of a patient or add more years to a person's life. The usage of Physical Therapy in sports and daily activities is exponentially increasing all over the world. In general population, the mindfulness regarding focal points of residual physical dynamics alongside the musculoskeletal injuries and physical health-related issues have been boundless, a situation with which, recreational athletes are, perhaps well aware.³ Physical Therapy has created a great impact and is considered a very important aspect in the field of sports, focusing on injury prevention, performance enhancement, identification and acute management of athletic injuries, long-term rehabilitation, and many more. Physical Therapy is not only considered as a medical field of health care but is also the art of healing for rehabilitative purposes and also as a health profession with a broad therapeutic impact.⁴

Exercise, physical training, and body fitness are often interlinked with one another and used interchangeably. "Physical movement," "work out," and "physical wellness" portray diverse ideas with the names of resistance training or endurance and strength conditioning. Though, identification of a wide array of activities is made possible with the introduction of the term fitness, these activities are employed in a variety of fitness centers and can be

classified into fitness activities.⁵

Previous research reported that the general sports-related injuries rate of athletes in a regular season was 6.3% for every 1000 players. Age and past injuries lead to increased risks of injuries. Strains and sprains are some significant types of injuries.⁶ In basketball players, lower extremity injuries are predominant where ankle is the most common site of injury. Knee and back injuries are also common but less frequent site of injury includes hip and groin.⁷

It is noteworthy that correct biomechanics provides accurate movement and reduces the risk of injuries, abnormal biomechanics are always a potential cause of non-traumatic sports injury.⁸ Poor techniques can cause abnormal biomechanics which contributes to subsequent injuries. Running with excessive anterior pelvic tilt and lumbar lordosis may result in hamstring strain.⁹ Moreover, the leading cause of injury among athletes is improper body mechanics and poor fitness levels that require medical care in all level players.¹⁰

Excessive and incorrect upper extremity activity may lead to shoulder instability, that is why physical therapy awareness is very important in athletes to avoid these hurdles.⁹ Physical therapists recommend the value of training that is given at home, which may be mechanical or manual, to improve the dynamics activity and reducing sports-related injuries among healthy players.¹⁰

Despite the significance of Physical Therapy, still, there are contradicting finding about the level of awareness of Physical Therapy in Football club-level players in local context, therefore, this study was carried out.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This was an observational, cross-sectional study conducted on 150 male players in various Football (Soccer) clubs of Karachi. The duration of this study was 3 months i.e. November 2020 to February 2021. Data collection was carried out in different clubs of Karachi, with participants' ages ranging between 15-35 years. Non-probability, purposive sampling technique was used in OpenEpi version 3.0 to calculate a sample size of N=150 participants with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error +/- 0.24.

Inclusive Criteria:

- Male/Female
- Age: 15-35 years

- No prior co-morbidities

Exclusive Criteria:

- International players
- Players associated with medical or allied health professionals.
- Players with any sort of mental disabilities
- Coaches, trainers

Procedure

A self-generated, close-ended questionnaire comprising of section A which included demographics and section B included questions regarding the purpose of physical training, duration of training, site of injuries, and their knowledge about physical therapy/physical therapists. After taking the research approval from ethical committee of Iqra University, the questionnaires were distributed among participants. The data remained confidential, and subjects were fully educated about the study objectives. Consent was obtained from the players after illuminating the study. Privacy and confidentiality of the players was assured.

Data Analysis:

Data was analyzed by using statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. Frequency was calculated and data was presented in the form of graph and tables.

RESULTS

This study has given us an insight into the players' knowledge regarding physical therapy profession and their jobs.

The questions started with the information of purpose of physical training and the result showed that 42% (n=63) players were doing fitness training along with the games to stay fit, only 4.7% (n=7) were doing physical activity to lose weight, 15% (n=23) were involved in fitness program without any purpose, whereas 37.3% (n=56) mentioned that physical fitness is the demand of their profession while only 0.7% (n=1) were doing fitness training for leisure. All players have different durations for physical training Figure I representing the training duration of athletes.

Players who frequently complained of pain during playing or training 9.3% (n=14), frequency of occasionally reported pain was 23.3% (n=35), 28.7% (n=43) mentioned pain once only, and 38.7% (n=58) never felt any pain.

Furthermore, the data revealed that back is the most common site of pain among these

players, and it accounts for 17.3% (n=26) whereas, 16.0% (n=24) players reported pain in the shoulder region which is the second most common site of pain. Knee and wrist pains were less common among trainees which extenuates to 14.7% (n=22) and 4.7% (n=7) respectively.

Survey indicates that only 14% (n=21) of Football (Soccer) club-level players received Physical Therapy services when they were injured, 22% (n=33) of players consulted an orthopedic surgeon, 17.3% (n=26) players did self-medication and 5.7% (n=8.5) communicated their pain to general physicians.

Figure 2 shows that 43% (n=64.5) of Football (Soccer) club-level players were not aware of Physical Therapy or what a physical therapist does, 26% (n=39) players got awareness about this profession from physician, 14% (n=21) got to know about this field from friends. Digital media always helps in spreading the information, 9.3% (n=13.95) of the participants were made aware from printed and electronic media, whereas 8.0% (n=12) received knowledge from family members.

DISCUSSION

Over the past few decades, a new trend is occurring in the world where adults have actively started to participate in sports activity in one form or another.¹¹ Apart from the illustrious merits of athletic activities, sports-related injury rates are also evident. Age, sex, body mechanics, playing position, type of sports, physical, and psychosocial states are to name a few contributing factors.¹² Sports physical therapists gain high attention because of performance and increased risk of musculoskeletal injuries among athletes.¹³

Among the athletic population, sports-related injuries are a serious health concern. It not only affects the physical health but also the mental health of a player and has untimely impacts on their social status.¹⁴

It is noteworthy that sports-related injuries are more prevalent among young male athletes. In U.S.A. out of every 10 players, 1 player has suffered from sports-related injury.¹⁵

Incidence and site of injury vary according to the type of sports. The prevalence of sports-related joint injuries varies from 5% to 60%,^{16,17} muscular injuries from 20–60%,^{18,19} and tendinopathies from about 10–50%.²⁰ In contrast to the evidence, our study indicates that more than half of the participants suffered from musculoskeletal pain. Takuya Sekiguchi et.al

observed the prevalence of musculoskeletal pain (25.5%) among young players and they found that playing hours may be a contributing risk factors.²⁰ Another study conducted on swimmers mentioned the prevalence of MSK (musculoskeletal) pain to be 20% evident, and moreover, 60% reported a sports-related injury once a year and shoulder is the most frequent site of injury whereas there was no association found between physical training and the presence of pain.²¹ Also, Line Lindberg et.al found a preponderance of MSK (musculoskeletal) pain to be 42.6% and back pain most common i.e. 31.3%, therefore, pain highlighted the hurdle in sports participation.²² Similarly, in our research prevalence of back pain is most common.

The survey conducted on hockey players proclaims the prevalence of joint and muscle pain is greater than other injuries which are 89% to 88%, respectively. However, the back is the most common site of pain 83%.

Furthermore, most of the players think that they cannot access a physical therapist directly, doctor's referral is necessary.²³ Same observation is evident from our research, and we have also indicated that only 14% of athletes visit physical therapist for a consultation.

The study benefits from a well-defined objective, suggesting that athletes need to be more aware of the scope and importance of physical therapy. This has practical implications for improving the health and performance of football players. These strengths contribute to the study's credibility and potential impact in the field.

The study does not compare the awareness levels of football players to those in other sports or to the general population. This could provide valuable context.

Foster collaboration between football clubs and physical therapy professionals. This partnership can help players access expert guidance and interventions more easily.

CONCLUSION

Physical therapy and a physical therapist are the major contributing professional in the team of rehabilitation. Wherefore, a strong relationship between athlete and physiotherapist is important to make the treatment effective and to enhance the performance of a player. Therefore, this is the duty of special educators, coaches, and

trainers to aware the players with the physical therapy profession and guide them from whom they can find the best treatment options. Clubs should hire therapists and facilitate the players for optimal performance.

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Figure I: shows frequency of player's fitness training days

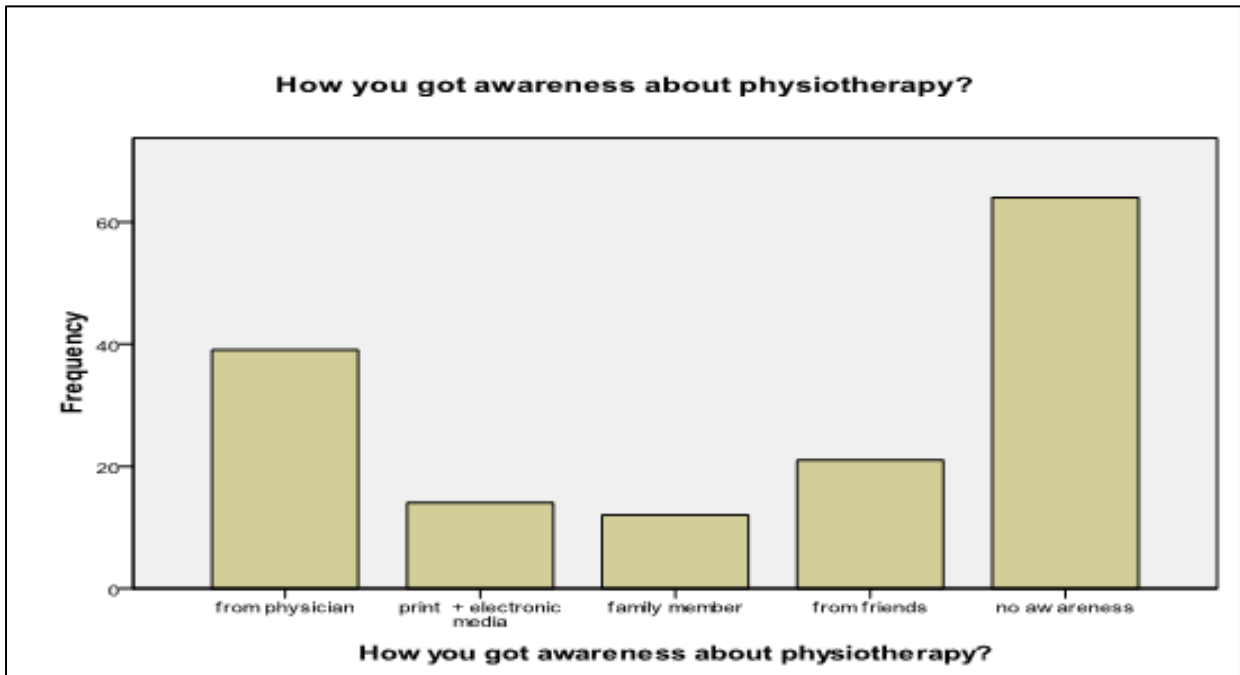


Figure II: shows mode of awareness about physical therapy profession