

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONGST PHYSIOTHERAPY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE

To study the level of emotional intelligence in physiotherapy students

STUDY DESIGN

A cross sectional study

PLACE AND DURATION OF STUDY

Baqai Institute of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Medicine Karachi from September 2016-October 2016.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

A cross sectional, self administered, structured questionnaire survey was conducted. 142 Undergraduate physical therapy students from second, third, fourth and final years aged 16-28 years participated in the study from Baqai Medical University. The structured questionnaire was adopted from Sterrett's EI questionnaire. It comprised of 30 questions, to evaluate the six domain of emotional intelligence by using 5-point Likert type scale

RESULTS

The findings showed that out of 142 undergraduate students 23 were males and 119 were female. The mean and standard deviation of age were 21.16 (1.94). In all domains self awareness was found to be more than others, with the mean and median scores of 19.47 and 20. Though self-confidence, self-control and social competency were at the lowest side, the complete emotional intelligence was evaluated with the highest score 148 and lowest 61 with the mean 108.3 and median 110. After the complete score calculated participants were evaluated. Only 19.71% of students had good emotional intelligence with score between 21-25 in all the areas.

CONCLUSION

The study was carried out to have a fundamental data on emotional intelligence of physical therapy undergraduate students. Only 19.71% of the students had good Emotional intelligence and rest of them required definite intervention for the enhancement of their emotional intelligence.

KEY WORDS

Emotional Intelligence, Social Competency, Empathy, Self Confidence

INTRODUCTION

Emotional Intelligence is an attribute just recently being observed for its importance in physical therapy and other health care disciplines. It is the ability to recognize and moderate one's own and others emotions¹, while simultaneously processing the information in order to make a decision about the present situation. It is a vital element of numerous health professions. Emotional intelligence is a potential that can be on both conscious and unconscious controls^{2,3}. Emotional intelligence plays the part to bring up the professional success⁴. These abilities help individuals to stay relaxed in tense situations as well as help others in controlling their emotions. Unfortunately, emotional intelligence height in society and health profession is reducing⁴. The modern generation of students lacks in communication and decision making qualities^{5,6}. In addition, they lack discipline and empathy, at the same time being highly stressed, agitated and self absorbed^{6,7}. Tolerance level is necessary for new professionals to function in their academic and professional lives effectively^{5,8}.

Gard and Gyllensten analyzed the literature on the significance of emotions during treatment sessions. They concluded that physiotherapists tend to respond mainly at an intellectual level even though they are aware of underlying emotions. They believe that if physiotherapists could better identify and express emotions, there might be a rise in their clinical reasoning skills and eventually on the treatment outcomes⁹. Another study revealed the need of emotional intelligence. If the measurement of EI is associated with effective therapist and patient interaction, and then physical therapy programs have to target that part in their curriculum¹⁰.

Data is scarce in the country when Emotional intelligence of physiotherapists concerns, this demanded a study to cater the need. Present study was designed to fill in the gap. It is a cross sectional, self administered, structured questionnaire survey.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

142 Undergraduate physical therapy students from second, third, fourth and final years, aged 16-28 years participated in the study from Baqai Medical University. The structured questionnaire was adopted from Sterrett's EI questionnaire¹¹. It comprised of 30 questions, to evaluate the six domain of emotional intelligence by using 5-point Likert type scale ranging from virtually never = 1 to virtually always = 5. All the students responded to each question. The total score was the sum of the 6 domains. The minimum and maximum score for each domain were 5 and 25 respectively. Average of higher than 20 were considered for

good emotional intelligence. Score between 16-20 was counted for average, score below 15 and 10 were considered for poor and very poor emotional intelligence. The collected data were evaluated using statistical software SPSS version 20. The mean, medium, and mode for responses between the groups were than correlated.

RESULTS

The findings showed that out of 142 undergraduate students 23 were males and 119 were female. The mean and standard deviation of age were 21.16 and 1.94. In Table 1 statistical variables are illustrated with minimum and maximum scores of each of component of emotional intelligence. In all variables self awareness was found to be more than the others, with the mean and median scores of 19.47 and 20. Empathy and motivation were almost the same between all the students.

Though self-confidence, self-control and social competency were at the lowest side, the complete emotional intelligence was evaluated with the highest score 148 and lowest 61 with the mean 108.3 and median 110. After the complete score calculation, only 19.71% of students had good emotional intelligence with score between 21-25 in all the areas. Whereas more than half of about 51.40% documented to have an average emotional intelligence. 28.16% of students have poor emotional intelligence while 0.70% are on beam ends scoring below 10.

Table 1
The statistical variance of the Six Components of Emotional Intelligence

N=142	Self Awareness	Self Confidence	Self Control	Empathy	Motivation	Social Competence	Overall score
Mean	19.47	17.5	17.19	18.34	18.5	17.30	108.3
Median	20	18	17.00	19.0	19	17	110.0
Standard	2.82	3.13	2.861	2.84	2.84	3.23	17.72
Deviation							
Minimum	11	9	10	11	11	9	61
Maximum	25	25	25	24	25	24	148

Table 2
Percentages of the overall subjects

Emotional Intelligence Components	Scores between (21-25)	Scores between (16-20)	Scores between (10-15)	Scores between (9-1)
Self Awareness	36.6	54.2	9.15	-
Self Confidence	16.90	59.85	21.12	2.11
Self Control	13.38	55.63	30.92	-
Empathy	23.23	56.33	20.42	-
Motivation	23.23	64.78	11.97	-
Social Competency	19.71	51.40	28.16	0.70

DISCUSSION

Results had shown that out of 142 students 119 were females. This is

in accordance with the trend in the majority of the colleges in Pakistan, as most of the females have selected physiotherapy as their profession. The emotional intelligence of all the participants were evaluated by the six facets of EI: Self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, empathy, motivation, and social competency. When each domain was evaluated in present study, few had scored above 20; while the majority of the students obtained average scores (16-20) followed by poor (11-15) and very poor (below 10). The same trend was seen when the overall scores were considered. This showed that most of the students required assistance to improve their emotional intelligence. Physiotherapy education is one of the most challenging, demanding, and stressful fields of study, as students are expected to acquire diverse competencies such as academic and clinical along with the interpersonal skills. Assessment of emotional intelligence is an important factor in determining students' adjustments and educational achievements. It is believed that emotional intelligence may explain differences in the quality of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships and contributes to job performance and management effectiveness and predict success¹². However, it is also expected that students have to develop communications, professional conducts and moral reasoning^{13,14}. Only few studies have been done and available data is sparse.

We acknowledge several limitations in the study. This study was limited to the students of Baqai medical university and the randomly selected samples of male and female students were not proportionate to respective populations. These aspects may limit the generalizability of the findings. However, this study provides basis for further exploration in the field of emotional intelligence which requires a great deal of research.

As EI was assessed based on the self-reported scale, the validity of the data can be questioned. This type of studies can be accurate only when the individual's self-concept is precise. The results of the study are prone for response bias as students can tend to either exaggerate or fake their responses.

CONCLUSION

The study was carried out to have a fundamental data on emotional intelligence of physical therapy undergraduate students. Only 19.71% of the physiotherapy students had good emotional intelligence and rest of them required definite intervention for the enhancement of their emotional intelligence.

Further research is required to identify the educational experiences that may produce an impact on the development of emotional intelligence. According to the specific cultural and social research, questions have to be redesigned to assess the emotional intelligence as Pakistan being known for the cultural diversification.

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Journal of Pakistan Psychiatric Society

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