Abstract

Introduction:
Physiotherapists have a responsibility to use systematic evidence in clinical practice and to ensure that the treatment of patients is based on the best available scientific evidence. Around the globe, evidence-based practice (EBP) is the professional standard, so it was important to assess whether the five steps of EBP were implemented and systematically utilized in our graduate (UG) and post-graduate (PG) education. The purpose of this study was to find the current trends of evidence based practice, research & critical appraisal in physiotherapy education and their impact on physiotherapy practice & health care.

Methods:
Descriptive and exploratory approaches were used to determine whether any inadequacies or gaps existed in current physiotherapy education by conducting 3 studies. Data was collected by conducting desk review, qualitative in-depth interview & by using modified Delphi process. Grounded Theory approach was used; theories and themes were collated from the data collected. An EBP module was developed using modified Delphi approach.

Results:
Desk review of curricula showed that content relevant to the skills of the five steps of EBP was included right from 2nd yr to final year. Guidelines about adopting EBP in clinical practice were found to be missing. Critical appraisal was least included in entry level education. Content relevant to all the five steps of EBP was included in majority of PG curricula. On analyzing interviews of senior Physiotherapy faculty range of themes were generated in the analysis. The identified integrative themes: “Need of EBP”, “Facilitators of EBP”, “Barriers of EBP”, “Integration of the research
component of EBP”, and “Faculty development and research engagement” were studied in detail. In the third study, the responses in round one of modified Delphi technique were analyzed on basis of central tendency of responses. For judgment on responses mode of 3 and above was considered. Consensus was achieved on the attributes, learning objectives and contents in the 1st round. In round 2, the three questions had a consensus of 76.19%, 85.7 and 85.7% respectively.

Conclusions:

Entry level physiotherapy curricula of majority universities in India were found to include the various competencies for steps of EBP teaching. It is seen that, it lacks a structured and organized approach. Also there is insufficient emphasis on clinical teaching. These results underline the requirement to develop entry-level educational programs on EBP. A needs assessment using in-depth interview and grounded theory helped understand the theories behind incorporating EBP. Using Delphi technique we developed an Evidence based practice module for entry level Physiotherapy students which could help them to be at par with current global trends.