

**AWARENESS OF GYNECOLOGISTS REGARDING THE ROLE  
OF PHYSICAL THERAPY SERVICE IN MANAGEMENT OF  
OBSTETRIC PATIENTS.**

**Maria Akmal<sup>1</sup>, Hafiz Asim<sup>2</sup>, Haseeb Ullah<sup>3</sup>**

*1 University of Health Sciences*

*2 Lahore Medical and Dental College*

*3 Pakistan Society for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled*

## Awareness of gynecologists regarding the role of physical therapy service in management of obstetric patients.

### Abstract:

**Objective:** To assess the awareness of gynecologists regarding the role of physical therapy service in the management of obstetric patient.

**Methodology:** It was an Observational cross sectional study design which was conducted in the teaching Hospitals of Lahore. 246 gynecologist were taken after meeting inclusion criteria . Data was entered in standardized questionnaire. Data analysis done by using SPSS version 20.

**Results:** Total number of gynecologist was 246 in the current study. The Gynecologist who were working in the government hospital n=101( 41%), those who were working in private setups n=145 (59%). From the total Gynecologist, in the awareness section of questionnaire, it was noted that n=159, 64% know about prenatal physical therapy. From 64% only 56% gynecologist referred their patients to the physiotherapist. From the total Gynecologist, in the awareness section of questionnaire, it was noted that n=167.68% replied that they know about postnatal physical therapy and from them only 20% n=49 referred their patients to the physical therapist (p value=0.217). From the total Gynecologist, in the referral section of questionnaire, it was noted that n=33, 13% doctors referred their patients to the physical therapist, n=164, 67% doctors referred sometimes and n=44, 18% doctors never referred their patients to the physical therapists.

**Conclusions:** it was noted that majority of the Gynecologist of Lahore have awareness about the physical therapy services and their importance in the prenatal and postnatal period but very few of them referred their patients to the physical therapists. There should be better interaction between obstetricians, gynecologists, and physiotherapists in the form of seminars, workshops, and grand rounds, could enhance knowledge and attitudes of obstetricians towards involvement of physiotherapists in patient management.

**Keywords:** Gynecologist, Physical Therapy, Awareness.

**Introduction:**

Gynecology and Obstetrics physical therapy is a major specialty in physiotherapy, which is concerned with the promotion of health during all the period of pregnancy. It helps the mothers to adjust the psychological and physical needs and changes that occur during the whole gestation period and after the delivery period. It also helps the mother to bear all the physical and mental stresses that she confront during the gestation period and after the childbirth (post natal period). Physical therapist specialized in Gynecology and Obstetrics require a very much expert blend of attributes that helps the mother to disclose the most confidential and very important aspects of personal life in detail. There are many roles of Gynecology and Obstetrics physical therapist such as problems during pregnancies during labor after the child birth postnatal period after C sections and their preparations before the C section. (Mota et al., 2014) How much the people utilize the Gynecology and Obstetrics physical therapy services, solely depend on the expertise of the physical therapist working in their area and the behavior of the physical therapist towards their patients. In our country gynecology and obstetrics patients mostly come from the reference of gynecology doctors and professors working in their area, so it solely depends on the behaviors and attitudes of the gynecologists towards the physical therapist. Most of the physical therapist in our country having a bachelor degree of physical therapy and also having some post professional doctor of physical therapy degrees. Usage of individual physical therapist professional skills only depends on its health care team members and also on the knowledge and expertise of the other health care team members, so that they provides their best services to the patients because most of the gynecology patients are very sensitive in nature. To overcome that there is a need of cooperation in between the professional team of health care workers in that team there are midwives, physical therapist, Professors and registrars of gynae and obes and laboratory technicians. (Mota et al., 2014)

According to one report it is found that the gynae physicians and professors working in the major hospitals have a very poor knowledge regarding the role and importance of physical therapy in the gynae and Obstetrics patients at different stages. This lack of awareness and knowledge of the senior doctors and professors working in the Gynecology and Obstetrics department would definitely affect the use of physical therapy services to the concerned patients and there would be definitely disasters effects on the grooming and development of the physical therapy profession in the country. In

another study it was reported that there is an increased awareness and expertise of the Doctors and professors of our country regarding the utilization of the physical therapy services in gynecology and obstetrics department. One more study reported in which the fact was found in spite of positive vibes and behaviors of Professors and Doctors of Gynae the usage of services provided by the physical therapist in this field is almost zero. (Laslett, 2008) Many studies have been done to check the role of physical therapy in different fields and to analyze the awareness levels of public and Doctor specially senior doctors in the specialized gynae physical therapist In a study it was mentioned that not only awareness is important the delivery of physical therapy services is also important so the doctors should realize that. However, in our country there is lack of knowledge regarding the Gynecology and Obstetrics physical therapy services and in this way the patients who required that services are very much affected and faced a lot of issues without knowing their solutions and in this manner the rate of stresses and anxiety of mothers is gradually increased that should be controlled on urgent basis. During pregnancy female body undergoes various changes. These changes lead to various problems such as Backache, SI Joint Pain, Urinary Incontinence, Pelvic Floor Dysfunction, Pelvic Pain, Musculoskeletal Dysfunction and Carpel Tunnel Syndrome. (Laslett, 2008). Lose clothing and prohibition of the knee crossing sitting, knee cross standing, floor sittings and the creams which have dilated effects on the skins should be guided. These types of signs and symptoms are easily treated in the females who are not pregnant but in pregnancy with the health of women fetus health is also considerable that's why medication is strictly prohibited. Advice the patient to patient to live happily without stress and exertion, it helps a lot to lessen the pain and discomfort symptoms in the pregnant women. (Acharya et al., 2011).

**Methodology:**

Observational cross sectional study design. Data was collected from teaching hospitals in Lahore. Non-probability Convenient sampling was used to get sample for study. Sample size is  $n = 246$  which is calculated by using the following formula

$$\text{Sample size: } \frac{z_{1-\alpha/2}^2 p(1-p)}{d^2}$$

$n$  = sample size,

$z_{1-\alpha/2}$  = is standard normal variate (at 5% type1 error ( $p < 0.05$ ) it is 1.96

$P$  = expected proportion in population based on previous studies = 80%

95% confidence interval was used.

$d$  = error margin 5%

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.80 (1 - 0.80)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$n = 246$ , so the sample size in this study was 246 gynecologist.

All the experienced gynecologist working in teaching hospitals is Lahore, Trainers, 2 years diploma holder after M.B.B.S, Minimum experience of 3 years are included in this study while Only M.B.B.S doctors, General practitioner and No post graduate qualification was excluded in this study. 246 gynecologists were taken after meeting inclusion criteria. Gynecologist was collected from teaching hospitals in Lahore. Basic Demographic history (name, age, gender) and contact details of gynecologist were taken. After taking consent from gynecologist, data was recorded on the standard questionnaire. This was entered into SPSS and analyzed properly. The data was collected by researcher herself and was collected on specially designed Performa. Data was entered and analyzed by using SPSS version 20. Qualitative data was analyzed by using frequency. Quantitative data was presented in the form of mean and standard deviation

## Results:

Gynecologist that were working in government hospitals were n=145(59)and those that were working in the private hospital were n=101(41)

<b>Job place</b>	<b>n%</b>
Government	145 (58.9)
Private	101 (41.1)

Patients that comes with physiotherapy related conditions were mostly of low back pain n=204(82), MSK conditions were (9) and pelvic floor conditions were (8).

<b>Common condition in patients</b>	<b>n%</b>
Pelvic floor dysfunction	19 (7.7)
Musculoskeletal condition	23 (9.3)
Low back pain	204 (82.9)

When a patient with any of the above mentioned conditions present to you treatment with medicines were 84% and with exercises were 16%.

<b>Treatment based on patient condition</b>	<b>n%</b>
Prescribed medicine	207 (84.1)
Prescribed exercise	39 (15.9)

Gynecologist that knows that there is a role of PT in gynecology with neutral were n= 51 (20), and with agree n=195 (80)

<b>Physical therapy role in gynecology</b>	<b>n%</b>
Neutral	51 (20)
Agree	195 (195)

Physiotherapy treatment application in pelvic floor treatment was 31% and with back pain were 68%.

<b>PT. application</b>	<b>n%</b>
Pelvic inflammatory disease	78 (31.7)
Low back pain	168 (68.3)

### **Discussion:**

246 gynecologists were taken in the current study in which the awareness of gynecologists regarding the role of physical therapy service in the management of

obstetric patient. From the total Gynecologist, in the awareness section of questionnaire, it was noted that n=159, 64% know about prenatal physical therapy. From 64% only 56% gynecologist referred their patients to the physiotherapist. From the total Gynecologist, in the awareness section of questionnaire, it was noted that n=167, 68% replied that they know about postnatal physical therapy and from them only 20% n=49 referred their patients to the physical therapist (p value=0.217). From the total Gynecologist, in the referral section of questionnaire, it was noted that n=33, 13% doctors referred their patients to the physical therapist, n=164, 67% doctors referred sometimes and n=44, 18% doctors never referred their patients to the physical therapists. Physiotherapy services has important role in health care settings. Physiotherapist independently diagnoses and treats patients. A study conducted in Nepal to evaluate the awareness of physical Therapy among clinical doctors in Nepal. It was noted that in the study ninety eight percent Gynecologist were aware of the physical therapy services and among them the referral of the patients to the physical therapy department is eighty eight percent which is far better than our study.(Acharya et al., 2011). Low back pain during pregnancy is a common problem and it affects their daily life and ability of work despite this pregnancy related low back pain is untreated. Only few women seek physiotherapy and some other treatment. (Mota et al., 2014). Sacroiliac joint pain refers to pain arising from SI joint structures. A study shows that the probability of SI joint pain is 89% in women with low back pain. (Laslette, 2008) A study conducted which include 1050 women. Prevalence of urinary incontinence was 44.6%. 95.5% women reported negative impact on their life and 64.7% women had not received any medical help. Early diagnosis, treatment, education of patient and psychosocial support is necessary. (Sensory et al., 2013) Pelvic pain is more prevalent. Stabilizing exercises along with modalities such as TENS, pelvic belts are helpful for patient. There are some other orthopedics problems. Lack of awareness and failure to recognize these conditions can increase problems. (bhardwaj and Nagandla, 2014)

A recent study shows that during pregnancy there is wide range of changes in female body which leads to musculoskeletal dysfunction such as low back pain, calf muscle cramps, foot pain, pelvic pain, pubic symphysis pain etc. All these musculoskeletal problems negatively affect the daily living of pregnant women. (Ramchandra et al., 2015)

In a study 14 RCTs with high methodological involving 6454 patients included shows that pelvic floor muscles training is very effective in prevention of urinary and fecal incontinence in both antenatal and postnatal women. Standardize kegel exercise plan can prevent urinary incontinence in women. (Park et al., 2013).

**Conclusion:**

The current study has shown the results regarding the awareness of gynecologist in referring their patients to the physiotherapy department in prenatal and postnatal period. Most of the gynecologist admires the role of physiotherapy services and they are fully aware about the importance of the physical therapy services in the pregnancy and after delivery but the referral of patients to the physiotherapy department is very poor and it should be improved to improve the quality of life in the patients with gyne and obstetrics patients. The patients who are referring to physiotherapy department is mostly with low back pain. It was seen that the gynecologist working in the private hospital referred more patients than the gynecologist working in the government hospital.



**References:**

- ABICHANDANI, D., RADIA, V. 2015. Awareness of various aspects of physiotherapy among medical residents, Vol. 4, 2319-7064
- ACHARYA, R., KHADGI, B., SHAKYA, N., ADHIKARI, S., BASNET, S., SHARMA, S, et al. Physiotherapy awareness among clinical doctors in Nepal. Journal of Institute of Medicine. 2011;33(2).
- BHARDWAJ, A. & NAGANDLA, K. 2014. Musculoskeletal symptoms and orthopaedic complications in pregnancy: pathophysiology, diagnostic approaches and modern management. *Postgrad Med J*, 90, 450-60.
- BRITNELL, S. J., COLE, J. V., ISHERWOOD, L., SRAN, M. M., BRITNELL, N., BURGI, S., CANDIDO, G. & WATSON, L. 2005. Postural health in women: the role of physiotherapy. *J Obstet Gynaecol Can*, 27, 493-510.
- HULME, J. B., BACH, B. W. & LEWIS, J. W. 1988. Communication between physicians and physical therapists. *Physical Therapy*, 68, 26-31.
- LASLETT, M. 2008. Evidence-based diagnosis and treatment of the painful sacroiliac joint. *J Man Manip Ther*, 16, 142-52.
- Mota MJ, Cardoso M, Carvalho A, Marques A, Sa-Couto P, Demain S. Women's experiences of low back pain during pregnancy. *J Back Musculoskelet Rehabil*. 2014 Sep 29.
- Mullai, Dhinakaran, Chanchal Gautam, clarence Samuel. Awareness of physical Therap Rehabilitation for Breast cancer related Lymphedema among Medical Oncology Team survey. *Int J Physiother Res* 2013;04:161-65.
- MUNAWAR, H., TASADDUQ, A., ZEHRA, N. 2013. Awareness of obstetricians/gynecologists regarding the role of physiotherapy services in managing obstetric patients. *Pakistan journal of Medicine and Dentistry*, Vol. 2 (01): 17-23
- ODUNAIYA, N. A., ILESANMI, T., FAWOLE, A. O. & OGUNTIBEJU, O. O. 2013. Attitude and practices of obstetricians and gynecologists towards involvement of physiotherapists in management of obstetric and gynecologic conditions. *Int J Womens Health*, 5, 109-14.
- PARK, S. H., KANG, C. B., JANG, S. Y. & KIM, B. Y. 2013. [Effect of Kegel exercise to prevent urinary and fecal incontinence in antenatal and postnatal women: systematic review]. *J Korean Acad Nurs*, 43, 420-30.

RAMACHANDRA, P., MAIYA, A. G., KUMAR, P. & KAMATH, A. 2015. Prevalence of Musculoskeletal Dysfunctions among Indian Pregnant Women. *J Pregnancy*, 2015, 437-105.

SENSOY, N., DOGAN, N., OZEK, B. & KARAASLAN, L. 2013. Urinary incontinence in women: prevalence rates, risk factors and impact on quality of life. *Pak J Med Sci*, 29, 818-22.

Shimpi A, Writer H, Shyam A, Dabadghav R . Role of Physiotherapy in India – Role of Physiotherapy in India – A Cross-sectional Survey to Study the Awareness and Perspective among Referring Doctorss. *Journal Medical Thesis* 2014 May-Aug ; 2(2):11-15