



Knowledge, Attitude and Perception towards Autism among physiotherapy students at Ahmedabad

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ABSTRACT

Background: Autism is a general term that is defined as a group of complex developmental brain disorders. Autism is associated with an inability to identify and distinguish one's own feelings. Fewer studies exist with the purpose of providing an attitude towards autism measure aimed at a more general population.

Methodology: A link of a questionnaire was sent online to physiotherapy students. The questionnaire included questions about basic social attitudes, knowledge and personal distance with the people suffering from autism.

Results: The result was carried out by using Microsoft excel 2016. This study shows 89% of perception which is good towards autism. Results showed that there is good knowledge, attitude and perception towards autism among physiotherapy students.

Conclusion: This study concluded that there is good knowledge, attitude and perception towards autism among physiotherapy students.

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitude, Perception, Autism, Physiotherapy

INTRODUCTION

A neurodevelopmental illness known as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is typified by limited, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests, or hobbies, as well as ongoing difficulties in social communication and social interaction. Significant impairments in social interaction and communication, the presence of stereotypes and peculiar interests, and the emergence of symptoms in the domains of imaginative play and social communication development prior to the age of three are characteristics of autism.¹ The prevalence of the condition is 0.62 percent worldwide. Up to 10% of children worldwide may have autism, a neurological disease that is somewhat frequent. It happens more often in boys than in girls².

Eye contact, facial expressions, body postures, and gestures are the most important nonverbal behaviours impacted by qualitative social deficits during social interactions. Among the signs of communication impairments include the difficulty to strike up or carry on a conversation with others, the use of unusual or repetitive jargon, and a lack of impromptu pretend play³. One or more stereotyped interest patterns, tight adherence to routines and rituals, stereotyped and repetitive motor mannerisms, and an ongoing fixation with object parts are examples of restricted repetitive and stereotyped behaviours and interests⁴.

The intelligence quotient (IQ) of children with autism varies, and each child functions at a different level. Due to the diverse range of symptoms and severity associated with ASD, it is classified as a spectrum disorder. While 46% of people with autism earn average or above average scores on intelligence tests, some people with autism score poorly (CDC 2010)⁵. Thus, many people with ASD are capable of academic accomplishment, including success at the university level, provided the right supports are in place.

MATERIALS & METHODS

Following approval from the institutional ethical committee, an observational study was conducted using purposive sampling on physiotherapy students.

Inclusion criteria: -

- People who are willing to participate
- Physiotherapy students
- Males and females

Exclusion criteria: -

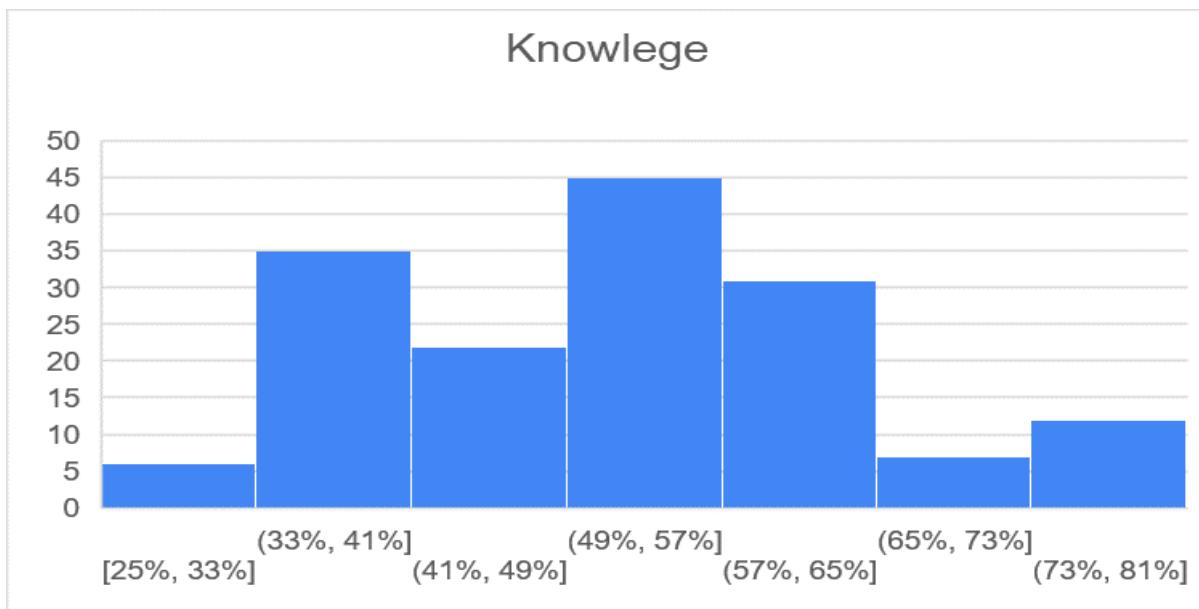
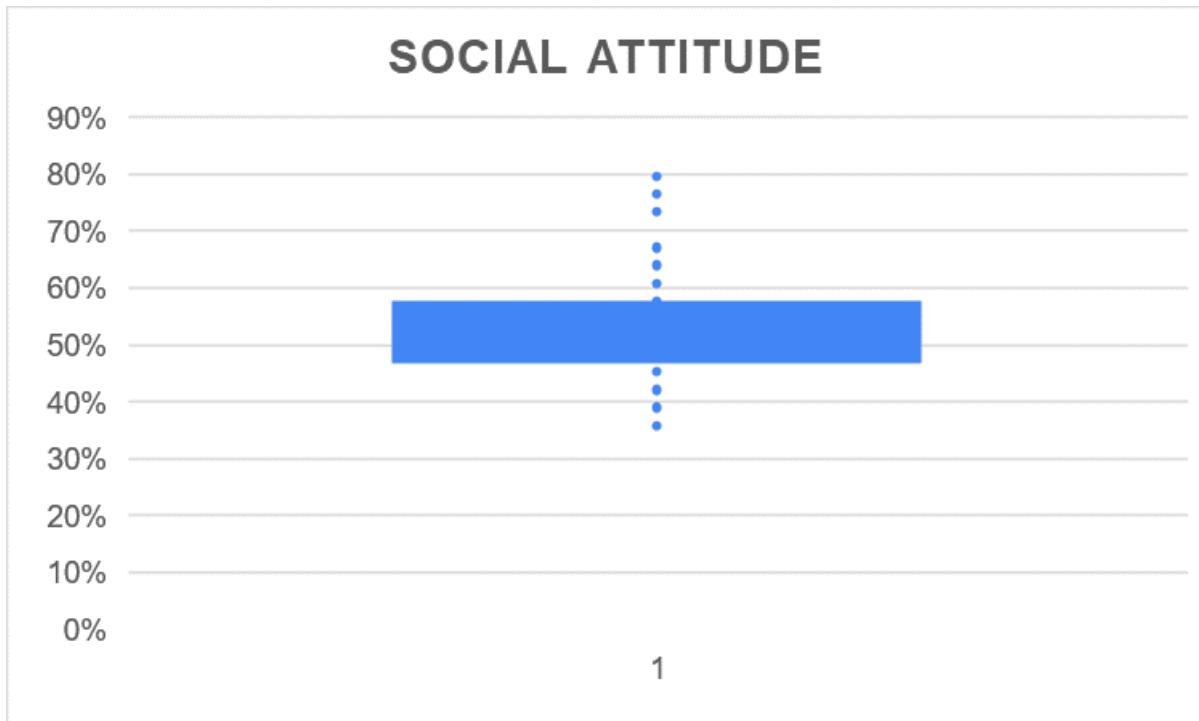
- Students who are not willing to participate
- Physiotherapy practitioners

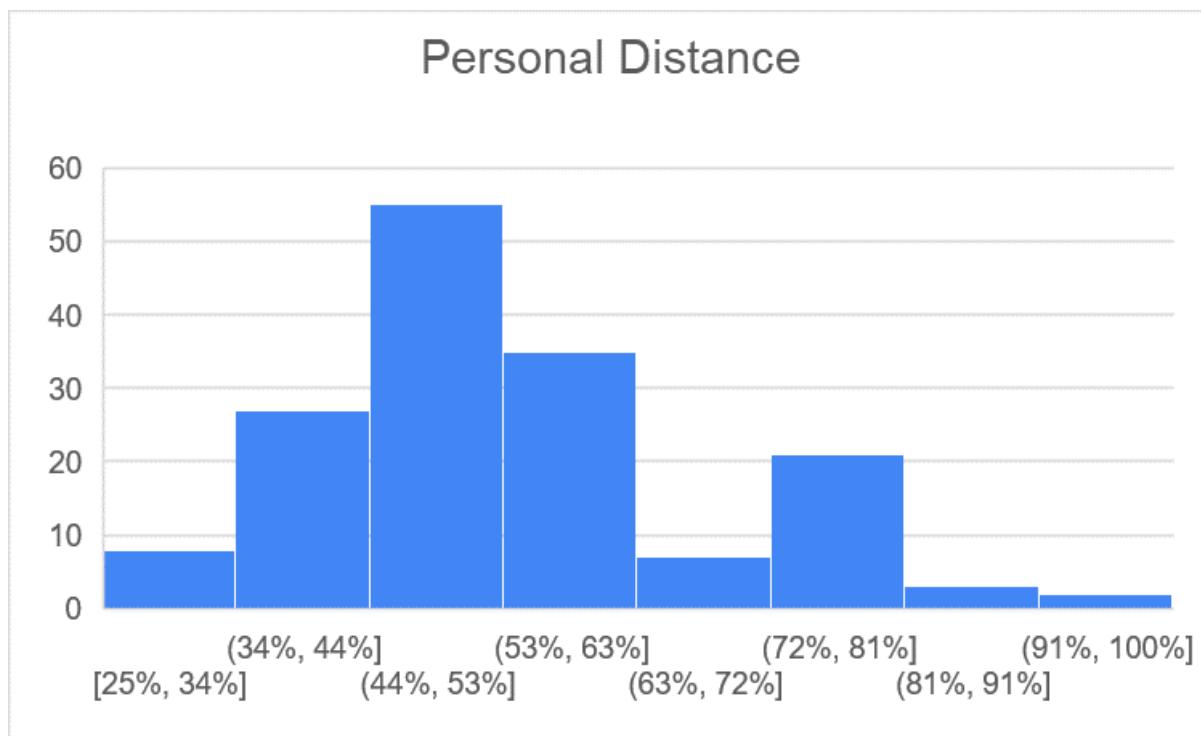
Procedure

The duration of the study was one month, during which data of 158 sample size were collected among various physiotherapy students of Ahmedabad. Google form was sent online and data was collected. The google form questionnaire consisted of demographic details and Development of the Societal Attitudes towards Autism (SATA) Scale. The 26 item, SATA scale consists of questions about basic social attitudes, knowledge and personal distance with the people suffering from autism. 1 point was given for person who strongly disagrees to the question, 2 for person who disagrees to the question, 3 for person who agrees to the question and 4 for person who strongly agrees to the question. Thus, the possible scores ranged from 26 to 104. For reliability analysis of SATA scale, internal consistency was first calculated, producing a Cronbach's alpha of 0.71⁷.

RESULT

The result was carried out by using Microsoft Excel version 2016. Data was collected from various physiotherapy colleges of Ahmedabad. Results showed that out of 150 sample size, there is positive social attitude towards people with autism having score of 93%. 90% students had knowledge about autism. This study showed 89% of perception which is good towards autism. Results showed that there is good knowledge, attitude and perception towards autism among physiotherapy students.





DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrated that students pursuing physical therapy had positive attitudes, knowledge, and perceptions of autism. The general public does not view ADHD as a condition that requires identification, diagnosis, and treatment. Since comorbid mental disorders often coexist with ADHD, which is a chronic diagnosis, it seems sense that these conditions tend to arise later in life and worsen as a child gets older. The logical, hypothetical deductive reasoning and abstract thinking skills that are required of teens with ADHD in the classroom will surely be more difficult for them to develop⁶.

According to a research by Malvi et al. (2023) on physiotherapists' awareness of autism, less than 50% of them have a general understanding of the condition. Additionally, individuals who work in pediatrics clinics possess greater awareness and knowledge than the other respondents³.

A study on "knowledge, attitudes, and views of autism spectrum disorder" was carried out by Yingna Liu et al. (2016) in a stratified sample of Chinese preschool instructors. Preschool teachers in China showed less awareness about ASD in the study compared to a solid foundation in usual childhood development. For half of the questions about ASD in the questionnaire, most teachers were unable to give proper answers. Despite the present professional consensus that ASD has a significant genetic component, a conception of the condition as psychological in origin predominated. One reason for inaccurate understanding of the illness could be the Chinese names GuduZheng or ZibiZheng, which are used to describe autism. Both titles literally translate to "loneliness disease" or "isolation disease"⁶.

A study on college students was done by Devon White et al. in 2016. The study set out to investigate the knowledge and attitudes of university students regarding students who are autistic, to pinpoint the underlying causes of these attitudes, and to see if these attitudes altered over a five-year span. Our hypothesis that students in the later cohort would have more positive views toward their peers on the autistic spectrum and better information about ASD due to the increased prevalence and awareness of ASD was validated. On the other hand, attitudes and knowledge (as determined

by the quantity of correctly identified qualities) did not significantly correlate. Taking cohort and gender into account did not change the significance of this association⁵.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that there is good knowledge, attitude and perception of Autism among physiotherapy students. Thus there is strong need to bring knowledge and awareness of ADHD among community. Correct knowledge, attitude and perception towards helps physiotherapy students to design correct plan and treatment in clinical practice.

Declaration by Authors

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Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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