

Phsiotherapy and unmet need of Rehabilitation

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.¹ Physiotherapy is an active health care occupation that aims to help the individuals with the achievement, maintenance, and restoration of maximal physical functioning and health throughout their life. Physiotherapists are the health care professionals who maintain, restore and improve movement, activity and health for individuals in all age groups, to ensure quality of life. Physiotherapists are involved in health promotion, prevention and treatment of diseases to ensure optimal functioning and better quality of life of individuals and populations.² Physiotherapists are persons who give their expertise in maintaining people's ability to function and move normal, in their daily routines of life. Their role starts from treatment and prevention of many problems caused by pain, illness, impairments and disease, sports and work related injuries, ageing and bed ridden conditions. Their main role now a days has appeared world wide as rehabilitation. Physiotherapy, after World War and polio epidemics has emerged as an integral part of health care team for overall rehabilitation of patients. In 21st century, the profession has continued to grow worldwide developing further scientific basis for its services, which are according to needs and demands of health care system and community.³ Physiotherapists not only work with people affected by painfull conditions such as arthritis, neck and back pain but their role has also emerged now in non communicable diseases such as cancer, strokes, heart problems, lung diseases, trauma, incontinence and rehabilitative services. The neurological technique used in physiotherapy today is rapidly emerging field.¹

Physiotherapy is considered as key treatment in rehabilitation of patients suffering from debilitating conditions as a result of accidents or diseases. Rehabilitation has been defined as enabling and supporting of individual to recover or adjust to achieve their full potential and to highest possible level of functional ability. Rehabilitation in public health is considered as tertiary prevention, when the disease process has advanced beyond its early stages and only rehabilitation play a role. It is by combined and coordinated role of physical medicine or physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, audiology and psychology. Rehabilitation can also help with stamina management in case of asthma, in patients with cardiopulmonary disease, chronic fatigue syndrome or following major surgery. According to WHO there is substantial and increasing unmet need for rehabilitation worldwide, which is particularly profound in low and middle income countries. Density of skilled physiotherapist practioners is less than 20 per million population in low and middle income countries which is questionable.⁴ The Global Burden of Diseases study shows that 74% of total of year lived with disability (YLD's) in the world is linked to health conditions for which rehabilitation can play a major role to achieve their productive life and 15% of all YLD's are caused by health conditions associated with severe levels of disability so rehabilitation plays a fundamental role in this.⁵ On 6th – 7th February 2017, Rehabilitation 2030: A Call For Action, was launched in which different strategies were made to overcome the disability rates and increase number of physiotherapists and others for the rehabilitation services in low and middle income countries like Pakistan.

In Pakistan, we have different rehabilitation centers like, Armed Forces of Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, Rawalpindi and others while the numbers of practicing physiotherapists according to Pakistan Physical Therapy Association (PPTA) is approximately 15000, with only 69 institutes offering physical therapy courses. Pakistan has disability rate of 2.65% with total around 5.035 million disabled people.⁶ There is crucial need for the increase in the numbers of physiotherapists and rehabilitation services and centers in Pakistan. There should be rehabilitation centre in each district hospital, tehsil level hospital and teaching hospitals so that the rates of disability should fall down and the people could live a productive lives. There is the need of more research and developments in the fields of rehabilitation. Further more this branch should be given a separate entity and its department should work in collaboration with other health care system departments.

Dr. Bismillah Sehar

Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine,
Sheikh Zayed Medical College/Hospital, Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan.
Email: drseharnaem@gmail.com

References

1. Muhammad Taimoor Khalid. Changing health care needs of the society, International Journal of Education and Information Technology 2015: 1(3): 105-110.
2. Anila Paul, Rajani Mullerpatani. Review of physiotherapy awareness across the globe. International Journal of Health Sciences and Research, 2015:5(10):294-301.
3. Today's physiotherapist: A comprehensive review of a 21st century health care profession, jan 2011.available from: www.apta.org, accessed on September 2014.
4. Rehabilitation: Available from: <http://www.who.int/rehabilitation/en/>.
5. GBD 2015 Disease and injury incidence and prevalence collaborators, 1990-2015; a systemic analysis for global burden of disease study 2015. Lancet. 2016:388:10053-7.
6. Aamir Raoof, Nasir Mansoor, Mohammad Ehab Azim, Furqan Ahmed. Physical Therapy as Professional and its Educational development. Journal of Pakistan Medical Association 2016:66, no:11, nov 2016