

Perceptions of Physical Therapy Clinicians Regarding the Impact

of COVID-19 on Patients' Mental Health Brandy Chase, DHSc, PTA and Amy Barnett, Ph.D. Southwestern Oklahoma State University



Introduction

- Research shows that the COVID-19 outbreak can negatively affect a person's mental health, especially those at a higher risk with debilitating conditions (Javed, Sarwer, & Soto, 2020).
- This alludes to the need to take a closer look at the impact of COVID-19 on physical therapy patients and the amount of mental health training needed by physical therapy clinicians.

Problem Statement

- Mental and behavioral issues are present in primary care and can have serious implications on patients' physical health (Murray, 2016).
- Physical distancing can have drastic negative effects on the mental health of the elderly and disabled individuals (Javed, Sarwer, & Soto, 2020).
- Together, these two lines of research suggest a need exists to further explore the impact of COVID-19 on elderly patients, as well as, how prepared providers are to handle the mental health needs of their patients.

Theoretical Framework

- Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Model was the framework utilized in this study (Bandura, 1997). The essential assumption of Bandura's model is that individuals need to believe in their effectiveness in order to perform certain tasks.
- If clinician's don't feel adequately trained to handle the mental health needs of their patients, they may ignore them or have low motivation to address them.

Purpose of Study

- The purpose of this study was to assess perceptions of physical therapy clinicians regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on a physical therapy patient's mental health.

Research Questions

1. Do physical therapy clinicians feel adequately trained on how to assess the mental health needs of their patients?
2. Has COVID-19 had a significant impact on the overall mental health of physical therapy patients' mental health?

Method

- One hundred fifty physical therapy clinicians were sent a survey to complete via e-mail.
- The survey was a 25-item survey regarding the clinician's perceptions of the impact of COVID-19 on their physical therapy patients, as well as, the clinician's perceptions of their own level of mental health training.
- Out of the 150 surveys, there were 45 who participated during the first round, which is a 30% response rate.

Participants

- Participants consisted of 45 physical therapy clinicians between 22 and 65 years of age, who were working in the field during the pandemic.
- Out of the 45 participants, 78% were female and 90.7% were Caucasian.
- Years of experience ranged from 3 months to 37 years.

Data Analysis

- The data was analyzed using Qualtrics Stats iQ.

Results

- Results revealed that 75.6% of physical therapy clinicians perceived that there was a negative impact on patient's mental health particularly in those patients who resided in long-term care facilities.
- Furthermore, 65.91% indicated they had not received any training related to mental health or self-care.

Conclusions

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the overall mental health of physical therapy patients, particularly those in long-term care facilities.
- Clinicians should be better educated on identifying the deteriorating mental health of their patients and understanding appropriate ways to intervene or refer for mental health services.

Q7 - Have you had any specific training related to mental health and self-care?

