

Awareness of Physical Therapy Services among Pregnant Women Attending Antenatal Care in Different Hospitals of Lahore

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Highlights:

- ▶ Awareness of Physical Therapy (PT) among pregnant women.
- ▶ Knowledge and awareness about PT may help patients in the pain management during pregnancy

Abstract:

It is a common perception that Pakistani women do not have awareness about importance of Physical Therapy (PT) during pregnancy which may lead to serious fetomaternal consequences.

Objective:

To determine the level of awareness of physical therapy among pregnant women attending antenatal care in different hospitals of Lahore.

Methodology:

The design of this study was cross sectional. Convenient sampling and a modified scale (questionnaire) was used for data collection. 190 pregnant women were included. Data were collected from private, Government and trust based hospitals (Fatima Memorial, Jinnah Hospital, Government teaching hospital Shahdara and Mansoura Hospital).

Results:

Very few pregnant women were aware about the PT services (n= 53; 27.9%). There were only 21.1% of women who had knowledge that PT is an exercise. Even only 16.8% gynecologists recommended these services. 14.2% women considered PT services necessary for pregnant women. 15.8% women stated that these services are effective in pregnancy.

Conclusions:

Pregnant women were not well aware about PT services in antenatal care during pregnancy period. They do not have knowledge about these services and awareness that these services may help them in reducing pain during pregnancy.

Key Words:

Awareness, Physical Therapy, Antenatal Care.

Introduction:

Physical Therapy (PT) is considered an important constituent of exercise for the intensive care patients in managing their health. It is confirmed that PT gives benefits for the short and long period as well. PT has multiple exercises to maintain physical and mental health of patients. It has many benefits especially for the antenatal care in pregnant females.¹ Pregnant women basically pass by the two important periods; prenatal and postnatal. It is also proven that PT gives benefits to women before and after child birth.²

According to World survey, 50% to 70% pregnant women suffer with back pain all over the world due to lack of PT awareness. Women experience back pain due to changes in hormones, posture, weight gain and gravity of body. They are less aware about the positive and beneficial results of PT in antenatal care.³ Talking about European countries, particularly America where there is 25% of Hispanics reduces weight by participating in physical activities.⁴ In Africa, 75.9% Nigerian women experience less back ache and 69.1% pregnant women reduce weight gain by practicing antenatal exercises. Nigerian people are not sufficiently aware of PT but they show their interest in these activities. In a research 15.8% pregnant women had negative attitude towards antenatal exercises and 83.3% have inadequate information about antenatal activities.⁵ In Kenya, 70% of overall sample out of 306 were not aware with antenatal exercises and 17.6% participated in school sports.^{6,7} While talking about Asia, 46% of Indian population is aware with antenatal exercises and 30% know the benefits of antenatal exercises. In Pakistan, 83.7 % of pregnant women are aware with

antenatal exercises, 95% are agreed about the benefits of exercises in pregnancy and 42% of population is actively participating in these kinds of exercises.⁸⁻¹⁰

PT in prenatal period is harmless for both pregnant woman and fetus in many situations.¹¹ On the other hand, most of the women are inactive during prenatal period and have less knowledge about work out during prenatal period. Here are many kinds of exercises which pregnant women can do during their pregnancy period.¹² The most important exercise for women is aerobics which increase the blood circulation, increased heart rate control of blood pressure and glucose intolerance.¹³

Antenatal or prenatal exercises comprise pubic floor aerobics, obstetrical PT, core immovability, belly workouts, breathing workouts and postural awareness. Pubic floor workouts are frequently practiced antenatal workouts to make stronger the muscles.¹⁴ There is also clear evidence about rigorous pubic floor control any discontinuous in urinary system before and after child birth.¹⁵ Moreover, few researches have suggested that PT in antenatal period supports expecting woman in decreasing difficulties of prenatal period, decrease the time used up in labor rooms and supports earlier postnatal recovery.⁹

It is an admitted reality that PT can improve the motherly well being and care.¹⁶ There is influential proof on the benefits of physical workout for the prenatal period for example; less time will be spend in labor rooms, avoidance of C sections, and fast recovery after giving birth.¹⁷ Awareness about the importance of workout to get relief from the special effects of prenatal period in women is infrequent.^{13,18} The purpose of this study was to determine the awareness of PT among the pregnant women attending the antenatal care.

Methodology:

A cross sectional study was conducted involving 190 pregnant women attending antenatal care in Fatima Memorial hospital, Mansoor Hospital, Govt. Teaching hospital Shahdara and Jinnah Hospital. The questionnaire consisted of two

parts; one was related to personal information and second was designed to collect information related to awareness of PT among pregnant women during antenatal care.

Results:

There were 190 respondents of different ages. N=45(23.7%) women were in age range of 18-25 years, n=71 (37.4%) in age range of 26-33 and n=74 (38.9%) fell in age range of 34-41 years. 53 out of 190 respondents (27.9%) were aware with PT services during pregnancy while n=137 (72.1%) participants were not aware with these services (Table 1).

Awareness of Physical Therapy services	Frequency (%)
Yes	53 (27.9)
No	137 (72.1)
Total	100.0

Table 1: Awareness of Physical Therapy services during pregnancy

When the women were asked if they know about these services, majority of them n=137 (72.1%) responded that they had no information about these services. N=30 (15.8 %) got information from their particular clinic, n=11(5.8%) by the social media and n=14 (7.4%) were informed by society. When the women were asked about their trimester of pregnancy n=69(36.3%) fell in first trimester, n=52(27.4%) fell in second trimester and n=69(36.3%) fell in third trimester (Table 2).

Source of information	Frequency (%)
Clinic	30 (15.8)
Social media	11 (5.8)
Society	14 (7.4)
No information	137 (72.1)
Total	100.0

Table 2: Source of knowledge about Physical Therapy services

N=44 (23.2%) of pregnant women had knowledge about the significant role of PT in pregnancy. While n=146 (76.8%) said that they had no knowledge (Table 3).

Knowledge	Frequency (%)
Yes	44 (23.2)
No	146 (76.8)
Total	100.0

Table 3: Knowledge about the role of Physical Therapy in pregnancy

N=125(65.8%) pregnant women said that they went for PT services on recommendation and n=65(34.2%) said that they didn't go for these services on recommendation. 14.2% pregnant women said that PT services are necessary during pregnancy and 85.8% said that these services are not necessary. N=32 (16.8%) respondents were referred by a physician to physiotherapist during pregnancy. The remaining n =158 (83.2 %) were not ever referred to PT during pregnancy (Table 4).

Referred by Physician	Frequency (%)
Yes	32 (16.8)
No	158 (83.2)
Total	100.0

Table 4: Referred by Physician to Physical Therapy during pregnancy

Discussion:

The pregnant women (87.4%) did not follow these instructions and exercises while in a study there were 48% women who did not follow. In terms of specific objectives of this research, the population of the research was not aware with these services in antenatal care. This is also inference from the research that awareness of PT services during pregnancy was very low with low education. In another study it has been observed that majority of the respondents were housewives (72%). Other pregnant women did not find time to do these exercises due to lack of time, late working hours and busy routine. Average age of pregnant women was 27.3 years (25-29 years). In current study, the age range was 29.5 years (26-33) years.

A research was conducted in South Africa, 90% of pregnant women were aware of the availability of antenatal care services, while 35.5% had knowledge about these services during the pregnancy.¹⁹ In this study, only 27.9% had knowledge about these services during pregnancy and 38.4% were aware with accessibility of these antenatal care services.

A case study of South Africa showed that 74% pregnant women had no information about PT exercises during pregnancy 26% got information by different sources.¹⁹ In this research, 135 respondents out of 190 were no information about these services. 30% were informed by their particular clinic, 11% by the social media and 14% by the society. The pregnant women (60%) commonly have pain, edema, tingling sensation and muscle cramp of hand and leg. 148 respondents (77.9%) were not aware about the PT services to help in the above mentioned conditions. In contrast, a research showed that 36% of the pregnant women had no knowledge about the availability of these to settle down the major problems.²⁰ On the other hand, 6% of participants had knowledge about the role of PT services during the pregnancy period. While in this research only 23.2% women had knowledge about the role of PT services during the pregnancy period. On the other side, in this research 76.8% respondents indicated that they were not aware about the role of PT during pregnancy period.

The results of this study showed that qualification also had an association with awareness. Because it has been observed there is need to improve the education level to increase awareness. On the other side, gynaecologists did not recommend or suggest these services. In first trimester these services are not effective while in the second and third trimester pregnant women did not have access, information and recommendation for these services. The source of information was also missing as very low number of people were informed about these antenatal care services. There is need to increase the number of information sources. They should have access to these antenatal care services

during pregnancy.

Conclusions:

Pregnant women were not aware of PT services in antenatal care during pregnancy period. Women do not have knowledge about the utility of these services and awareness that these services may help them in reducing pain during pregnancy.

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