

Knowledge about Physiotherapy Management for Pregnancy Related Discomforts in Primigravida – A Cross Sectional Survey

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Abstract:-

Background: Pregnancy is an important period in a woman's life, where the mother's body undergoes many physiological and emotional changes such as low back pain, cramps, ankle swelling, breast tenderness, postural change, difficulty in mobility due to weight gain, emotional behaviours, etc. These discomforts may not be harmful but could be troublesome and the primigravidae finds it more difficult to handle those discomforts. A proper approach to a physiotherapist and participation in antenatal classes encourages the pregnant women to adopt the measures needed to relieve her from the discomforts.

Objective: To find the presence of knowledge about physiotherapy management for pregnancy-related discomforts in primigravidae – a cross-sectional study.

Methodology: According to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 30 primigravidae women were included in this study.

Outcome Measures: Self-structured questionnaire was given to the primigravidae after proceeding with the consent form.

Results And Conclusion: Among 30 primigravidae, only 5 women were aware of physiotherapy care. This study concludes that the awareness about physiotherapy management in pregnancy-related discomforts among primigravidae is very low.

Keywords: primigravida, pregnancy, discomforts

I. INTRODUCTION

“Pregnancy is a normal, natural life event”. It lasts for about 40 weeks of gestation and it can be divided into three trimesters where 1st to 13th week is the first trimester, 14th to 26th week is the second trimester and 27th to 39th or 40th week is considered as the third trimester. During this period, the mother's body undergoes several changes to adapt herself for the growing foetus that is inside her womb. Physical changes such as weight gain, breast enlargement and tenderness, increase in breast size and hyperpigmentation of areola, lordotic posture, low backache, increase of fundal height, swelling in ankles, cramps, frequent fall in blood pressure along with emotional changes such as anxiety,

depression, irritability, etc. are majorly found in a pregnant woman.

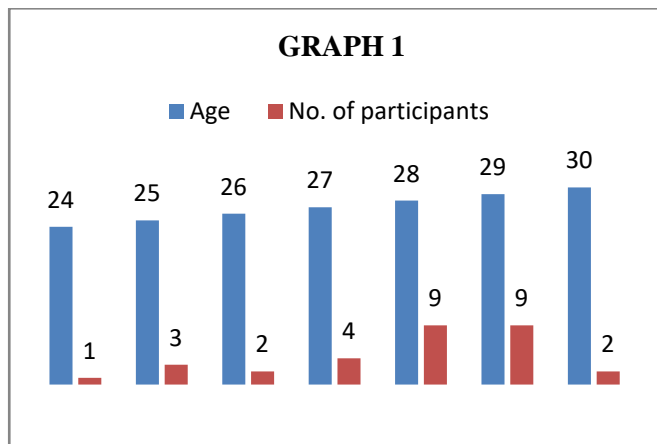
These changes are not abnormal but could be troublesome to the mothers especially for the primigravida (pregnant for the first time) as she finds it more difficult to handle those discomforts. Physical therapy helps to overcome these discomforts and thereby improve their QOL. A proper approach to a physiotherapist during the antenatal, perinatal and postnatal period encourages the women to adopt the measures that are required to relieve herself from discomforts.

Physiotherapist plays a vital role during pregnancy such conducting antenatal classes around 28th to 30th week of gestation, explaining various relaxation positions to cope up the pain during labour, guidance on breast care, back care, breastfeeding positions and exercises to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles. Their aim is to provide the optimal care of the mothers. This knowledge about physiotherapy management in pregnant women during and after her pregnancy period is very scarce. Therefore this study aims to find knowledge about physiotherapy management for pregnancy-related discomforts among primigravidae.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study design was non-experimental, observational type. 30 primigravidae were included in this study and the study setting was in and around Chennai. Inclusion criteria for the study were primigravidae in any trimester and age between 20 to 30 years (27±1). The individuals who were not willing to participate were excluded from the study. Proper consent was taken from the mothers before proceeding with the self-structured questionnaire. The self-structured questionnaire consisted of 30 questions with options based on their chief complaints, physiotherapy awareness and physiotherapy exercise sessions attended. These questions were explained to the mothers clearly and they asked to encircle the desired option.

GRAPH 1 represents the age group of the participants.



Mean	N	Std. Deviation
27.7333	30	1.55216

TABLE 1 shows the mean age of 30 samples i.e 27±1

GRAPH 2 represents the No. of participants and their trimester

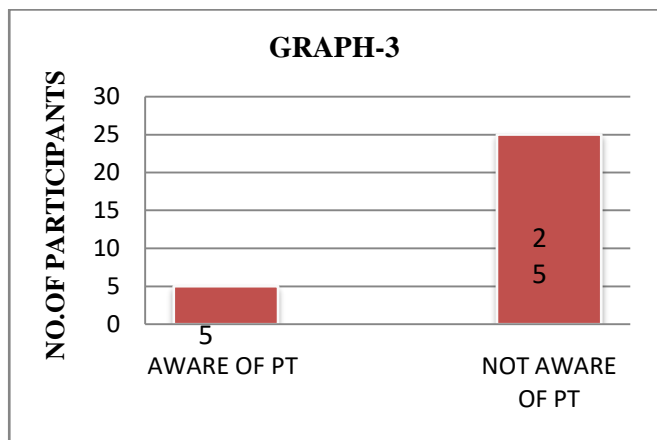
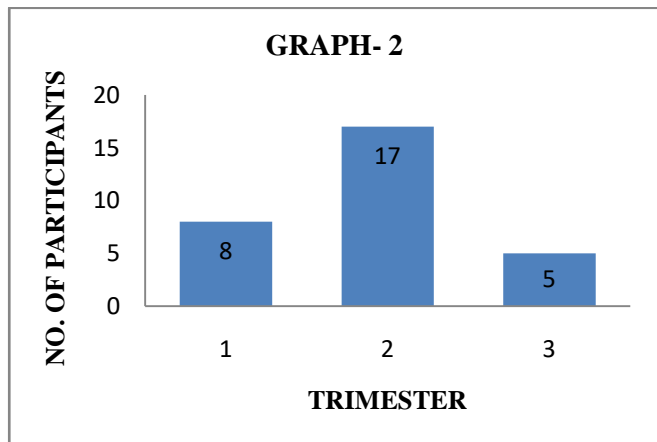


TABLE -2 ATTITUDE OF PARTICIPANTS TOWARDS THE ROLE OF PHYSIOTHERAPY

	n	%
Awareness about physical therapy		
Yes	5	16.6
No	25	83
Info about physiotherapy		
Newspapers	0	-
Friends/relatives	3	10
TV	1	3.3
Obstetrician	1	3.3
Perception about physiotherapy		
Exercises	2	6.6
Electric current to relieve pain	3	10
Massage	0	-
No idea	25	83
Follow PT advice		
Yes	1	3.3
No	0	-
Forget to follow	3	10
No time to follow	1	3.3
Referral for physiotherapy		
Yes	7	23.3
No	23	76.6
Chief complaints during pregnancy		
Low back ache	7	23.3
Numbness	3	10
Swelling	11	36.6
Cramp	9	30
Management for those discomforts		
Rest	17	56.6
Medications	0	-
Yoga	4	13.3
Other	9	30

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

GRAPH-3 shows that among 30 primigravidae, only 5 women were aware of physiotherapy care by their friends/relatives and television. TABLE-2 shows the attitude of participants towards the role of the physiotherapist. These primigravidae had discomforts which can be relieved by following physiotherapist advice but none of the few who had a knowledge about physical therapy care followed the advice given by the therapist. Wolfe LA et al stated that exercises during pregnancy is safe for mother and foetus it helps to maintain the prenatal aerobic and musculoskeletal fitness

levels, preventing excessive maternal weight gain, facilitating labour, controlling the gestational glucose level and improving the psychological adjustment to changes of pregnancy.

According to **Wong and McKenzie**, they found that the mothers who engaged in regular exercise, have a reduced second stage of labour, which have been related to the increased cardio respiratory fitness and ability to postpone fatigue during the active stage of labor. Although the women had an idea about the importance of exercises, they still felt the need of relaxing themselves.

Kelly Everson et al reported that 85% of the women have the intrapersonal barriers (physical illness, tiredness etc) to do physical activities.

The limitation of this study was not considering the educational level of the mother and socioeconomic status of their family, which could be included in further studies. Physiotherapy during antenatal, natal and postnatal period could resolve those discomforts in a better way and thereby improve the quality of life of a pregnant woman.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the awareness about physiotherapy management in pregnancy-related discomforts among primigravidae is very low. Therefore more awareness should be created in the society and the obstetrician could advise the pregnant women to seek advice from the physiotherapist to ensure the relief from the discomforts

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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