

# Awareness about Role of Physiotherapy Management During Labour among Obstetricians and Gynecologists

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## Abstract

**Background-** Pregnancy is the period where a woman goes through many physiological changes, these changes are physical and also emotional. To make this phase comfortable during pregnancy and at labour is an important concern. Various measures are available for this purpose one of these is physiotherapy. Breathing Exercises, relaxation, swiss ball etc. This study is conducted to find if this has been practised and till what extent and find the awareness about role of physiotherapy management during labour pain among obstetricians and gynaecologists. This will also help us to overcome the problems. **Objectives-** To assess the knowledge of obstetricians about physiotherapy management in labour pain. To determine the awareness about role of physiotherapy in managing labour among obstetricians and gynaecologists. **Method-** total 144 obstetricians and gynaecologist were taken in this study, they were explained about the purpose of the study. Each of them was given a self-made questionnaire. Data was recorded. Later statistical analysis was done in accordance to awareness about physiotherapy management during labour. **Result-** The present study showed that the awareness among obstetricians is less regarding role of physiotherapy in managing labour due to lack of knowledge and also due to unavailability of a qualified physiotherapist in that particular area. **Conclusion-** On the basis of result it can be concluded that there is need for better interaction and communication between physiotherapist and obstetricians and gynaecologists, which can be done through journals, seminars, UG/PG curriculum, social media, workshops.

**Key Words-** Physiotherapy, labour, awareness, obstetricians, gynaecologist.

## Introduction

Apart from allopathy, India is blessed with different indigenous systems of medicine. Where each system aims at encouraging good health; out of these Physiotherapy is one.

Physiotherapy offers services that maintain, repair, and expand people's maximum functional ability. It can be beneficial to people at any stage of life.

Pregnancy is a period when a woman undergoes many physical and psychological changes in the body. These all changes are normal and because of growing foetus mainly changes are noticed in abdominal and thoracic regions. <sup>(1)</sup>

Labour: Labour is defined as a series of events that take place in the genital organs in an effort to expel the viable product of conception (foetus, placenta and membranes) out of the womb through the vagina into the outer world. <sup>(2)</sup>

There are 3 stages of labour:-

· **First Stage-** It begins with the onset of contractions and ends when the cervix is fully dilated.

Duration: In Primigravida = 8-12hrs.

In Multigravida = 6-8hrs

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• **Second Stage-** It begins after the cervix has fully dilated and baby's head has moved down in to the birth canal. It ends when the baby is born.

Duration: In Primigravida = 1-2hrs

In Multigravida = ½ hrs

• **Third Stage-** It involves the expulsion of the placenta from the body.

Duration: Up to 30 minutes, however the average length of the third stage of labour is 10 minutes. <sup>(2)</sup>

The control of labour pain and prevention of suffering are major concerns of clinician and pregnant lady. So management of labour pain is the most important goals of maternity care. <sup>(3)</sup> This management includes pharmacological as well as non-pharmacological approach. In non-pharmacological ways "PHYSIOTHERAPY TREATMENT" is one of them.

Obstetric physiotherapy is subspecialty in physical therapy which deals with the promotion of health throughout the child bearing phase. Utilization of physical therapy depends upon knowledge of obstetrician and their attitude towards physiotherapy. <sup>(1)</sup>

Early bird classes are conducted for reducing the discomfort during child bearing phase. This antenatal classes are conducted by the team consisting of obstetricians, gynaecologists and physiotherapists.

In this classes women's are encouraged to bring their partners or some other person of their choice.

In early bird classes physiotherapist helps patient with following things:-

Pregnancy back care

Pelvic floor and pelvic tilting exercises

Exercises for circulation and cramps

Fatigue

Effects of stress on body and mind

Emotional reactions

Advice of lifestyle

At the end of 'Early bird classes', the mothers have sufficient knowledge about relaxation techniques,

ergonomically correct positions etc. which will help her for preparation of labour without discomfort. <sup>(4)</sup>

Role of physiotherapy in obstetric conditions like pregnancy, labour, puerperium, pre-operative period is important. <sup>(5)</sup> Postural re-education, strengthening of pelvic floor muscles helps during pregnancy. While TENS (Trans cutaneous nerve stimulation), positioning, relaxation techniques, heat and cold, ball exercise, massage and breathing techniques help during labour pain.

For the management of the labour there are several techniques and approaches are used by physiotherapists according to the stage of labour.

Physiotherapy management includes:-

1. TENS (Trans cutaneous nerve stimulations)
2. Positioning
3. Massage
4. Relaxation techniques
5. Breathing techniques
6. Hot water bath
7. Swiss ball exercises. <sup>(3)</sup>

Generally in first stage we start with breathing exercises which help to maintain ventilation and helps mother to push. TENS is used for back pain management, then patient is made to sit, stand or lying in different positions for pain relief. Relaxation techniques are given to relax mother and prevent fatigue. Massage can also be given for relaxation. Hot water bath is given for relaxing the pelvic floor muscles. Swiss ball exercises are also included in first stage of labour.

In second stage of labour relaxation techniques are given along with breathing exercises to keep mother calm and relaxed which also helps in easy vaginal delivery.

In third stage breathing exercises are given. <sup>(6)</sup>

Child bearing is the most important and crucial time for any women; physiotherapy helps for the betterment of the mothers health. As there are various methods for managing the labour pain, so the present study intended to find the awareness about the management by physiotherapy for labour pain among Obstetrician and gynaecologists.

## Material and Methodology

This study was to find the awareness about role of physiotherapy management during labour among obstetricians and gynaecologists. The study was carried out in Dhule district. An approval for the study was obtained from the protocol committee and ethical committee of KIMSDU. Individual were approach and those fulfilling the inclusive criteria were selected. The purpose was explained and written inform consent was taken prepared in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration from those who are willingly to participate. The total 144 participants were taken from different hospitals in and around Dhule. The Inclusion criteria was Obstetrician and gynaecologists male and female, Rural and sub-urban practitioners, New and old practitioners, Government and Private doctors of Dhule. The Exclusion criteria was Obstetrician and gynaecologist residents and Metro city practitioners. Demographic information of the subjects was taken. The individuals were explained about the purpose of the study. Each of them was given a self-made questionnaire. Data was recorded. Later statistical analysis was done in accordance to awareness about physiotherapy management during labour.

## Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis of the recorded data was done by using the software SPSS version 20. The p value is less than 0.001 which is significant.

## Result

The present study showed that the awareness among OBG in less regarding role of physiotherapy in managing labour due to lack of knowledge and also due to unavailability of a qualified physiotherapist in that particular area.

**Table No 1- Gender Distribution:**

Gender	No. of Participants	Percentage %
Male	64	47
Female	71	53
Total	135	100

INTERPRETATION- The table shows the gender wise distribution of the participants of this survey; there are 47% of males and 53% of females participated in the study.

**Table No 2- Distribution of Question Wise Percentage of Awareness:**

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS				
ARE YOU AWARE THAT PHYSIOTHERAPY CARE IS REQUIRED DURING LABOUR?	YES (68%)	NO (32%)			
WHAT DIFFERENT TREATMENT OPTIONS OF LABOUR MANAGEMENT FROM PHYSIOTHERAPY YOU AWARE OF?	relaxation techniques (10%)	Breathing exercises (8%)	Kegel's exercises (10%)	Yoga (10%)	Don't know (62%)
DO YOU REFER OR CONSULT PHYSIOTHERAPIST DURING LABOUR PAIN MANAGEMENT?	Yes (33%)	No (67%)			
DID YOU EVER CONDUCTED EARLY BIRD CLASSES WITH THE HELP OF PHYSIOTHERAPIST FOR ANC PATIENTS?	Yes (13%)	No (87%)			

**Cont... Table No 2- Distribution of Question Wise Percentage of Awareness:**

ACCORDING TO YOU WHY ANC PATIENTS ARE NOT REFERRED TO PHYSIOTHERAPISTS?	Lack of Knowledge/ Poor Awareness /Don't Know (79%)	Unavailability Of physiotherapist (10%)	Lack of Counselling of Patients (5%)	Don't find it Necessary (1%)	Ignorance (5%)
WHAT IS YOUR FEEDBACK FOR PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES PROVIDED IN LABOUR PAIN?	Positive Feedback (50%)	Negative Feedback (8%)	Lack of Awareness (12%)	Lack of Availability (5%)	Don't Know (25%)

**Interpretation:**

The table shows the question wise responses of the participants.

When we ask them if they are aware that physiotherapy care is required during labour 68% Obstetrician and gynaecologist are aware about physiotherapy care is required during labour and 32% says that they are not aware about this practice.

From this participants 67% participants don't know about any treatment options of labour management from physiotherapy remaining 10% knows about relaxation techniques, 10% yoga, 10% Kegels exercises and 8% knows about the breathing exercises.

33% of participants says they refer or consult physiotherapist during labour pain management and 67% participants says they don't refer/consult physiotherapist during labour pain management.

13% participants conducted early bird classes with physiotherapist for ANC patients and 87% never done this for there ANC patients.

When we try to find out the exact reason for not referring ANC patients to physiotherapist we found lack of knowledge/poor awareness is the one of the most important reason for this 79% participants finds this option correct, 10% says unavailability of OBG specialised physiotherapist is the reason, 5% participants find lack of counselling of patient is the correct option and remaining 1% says they don't find physiotherapy necessary during ANC period.

When they share their feedback for physiotherapy services provided in labour pain then 50% participants says positive things, 8% says negative things, 12% says there is need to make patients and doctors aware about

physiotherapy during labour management, 5% says unavailability of OBG specialised physiotherapist is the reason and 25% don't know about it.

**Discussion**

The study was conducted with the primary aim to find awareness about role of physiotherapy management during labour among obstetricians and gynaecologists. Many doctors were approached but only 135 responded and were willing to participate in this study. From that 135 people there are 64 males and 71 females which is 47% of male and 53% females.

In this study maximum doctors were between the age group of 36-45 years, that is 49 which means 36% of all the participants. There were 42 doctors between the age of 46-55 years which makes 31% of all the participants. 38 young doctors participated in this study they were between the age group of 25-35 years which makes 28%. Senior most doctors also participated in this study but the made only 5% of all the participants they were 6 doctors from age group of 56-65 years.

Differentiation by the practice in field like government and private practitioners there were 44% of government practitioners and 56% are private practitioners also in this study.

From this 135 doctor 112 doctor said they had physiotherapist nearby them and 23 of them said there was no physiotherapist nearby them.

81% of participants were aware about post-graduation courses in physiotherapy reimaging 19% says they are not aware about the post-graduation courses.

Doctors who are aware about physiotherapy care during labour are 68% and 32% were not aware about it.

34% of doctors says they came to know about physiotherapy role in management of labour during their under graduation degree and 16% says they came to know about it in post-graduation degree. Were seminars and journals makes awareness in 36% of doctors and remaining 14% says they come to know about it from internet, social media, colleagues, physiotherapists and by experience. In this study 60 participants from government sector and out of them 39 means 65% practitioners are aware about the physiotherapy role during labour pain management and remaining 21 means 35% practitioners are not aware of physiotherapy role during managing labour pain. There are 75 practitioners are from private sector and out of 75 53 are aware about the physiotherapy role during labour pain management and remaining 22 participants means 29% are not aware about the physiotherapy role during labour pain management. In this study out of 135 participants 38 were know at least one exercise for labour pain management which means 97 participants were less aware about physiotherapy during labour pain management. Which makes 38% participants are aware about at least single exercise in labour pain management remaining 62% participants don't know about it. This study shows that there are 33% participants which refer or consult physiotherapist during labour pain management and 67% participants are not aware about it or they are not working with physiotherapists. 45 participants says that they were working with physiotherapist for labour pain management from that 45 participants 43 says they are satisfied with the post physiotherapy outcomes of labour pain management were 2 people says they are not satisfied with the outcomes which means 96% are satisfied with outcomes and 4% are not satisfied with it. From this 135 participants 121 participants which makes it 90% of study population says they will now suggest physiotherapy for labour management to their colleagues and patients remaining 14 participants 10% of study population says they don't want to suggest physiotherapy to colleagues and patients. Which shows that maximum participants are welcoming the physiotherapy services for the betterment of the patient and they want it to help them during labour pain management. Which means they are willing to promote and utilize physiotherapy for better results.

In this study we ask them to tell us about why they are not referring ANC patients to the physiotherapists

and all of them responded. They share their valuable opinions. Maximum participants which means 79% of them says it's because of lack of knowledge and poor awareness; 10% of them says that there is unavailability of the OBG specialised physiotherapist. 5% of them says there is lack of counselling to the patient is a reason; were 5% says ignorance towards the non-pharmacological approach. 1% participants don't find it necessary for their patients. During this study lots of suggestions are taken from them. Most of participants are willing to improve their services by utilizing physiotherapy and make it better for their patients. They also says there is lack of knowledge about it in their filed and lack of awareness about physiotherapy during management of labour pain. As previous literature also says that there is lack of awareness about the OBG physiotherapy in comparison to Musculoskeletal physiotherapy, Neuro physiotherapy, Cardio respiratory and sports physiotherapy.

## Conclusion

This study also shows that maximum participants are come to know about physiotherapy management during labour pain from journals and seminars so it may be the best and easy way to communicate with them and make them aware about this. As well as we can aware them during their UG/PG degree curriculum. There is need for better interaction and communication between physiotherapist and obstetricians and gynaecologists, which can done through journals, seminars, UG/PG curriculum, social media, workshops. Which needs to be done properly.

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**Ethical Clearance:** Taken

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