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Patient-Perceived Functional Improvement and Societal Impact of Physiotherapy: A Survey of Outpatient Department and Inpatient Department Settings

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ABSTRACT

Physiotherapy plays a crucial role in rehabilitation by improving mobility, reducing pain, and facilitating social reintegration. Assessing patient experience and societal impact in different care settings is vital to ensure quality outcomes and optimise healthcare delivery. The study aimed to evaluate patient satisfaction, functional improvement, and societal reintegration following physiotherapy in outpatient (OPD) and inpatient (IPD) settings through comprehensive patient feedback analysis. A cross-sectional survey study was conducted over 6 months at Santosh Hospital, Ghaziabad. Using systematic random sampling, 93 patients who completed physiotherapy treatment participated. A structured, pre-validated questionnaire assessed demographics, treatment characteristics, patient satisfaction (5-point Likert scale), perceived functional improvement, and treatment effectiveness. Data were analyzed using Python with descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, and visualisation techniques. The study included 93 patients (OPD and IPD) with diverse demographics and conditions. Patient satisfaction was consistently high across all domains, with 89% rating physiotherapist communication as 4–5/5. Treatment effectiveness showed positive outcomes: 78% reported Significant/Complete pain relief, 82% reported mobility improvement, and 85% rated overall health status as Greatly improved post-physiotherapy. Physiotherapy services demonstrated high patient satisfaction and positive health outcomes in both OPD and IPD settings. The findings support the effectiveness of current physiotherapy interventions and highlight the importance of patient-centred care approaches in rehabilitation services.

KEY WORDS: PHYSIOTHERAPY, PATIENT SATISFACTION, SOCIETAL IMPACT, OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT, INPATIENT DEPARTMENT, REHABILITATION, INDIA.

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INTRODUCTION

Physiotherapy is a cornerstone of modern healthcare, providing evidence-based interventions to restore function, alleviate pain, and promote independence across

diverse patient populations [1,2]. As a healthcare discipline that addresses physical impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions, physiotherapy significantly impacts both individual patient outcomes and broader societal functioning [3,4].

In the Indian healthcare context, physiotherapy services are delivered through both outpatient (OPD) and inpatient (IPD) settings, each presenting unique advantages and challenges. The growing burden of musculoskeletal disorders, neurological conditions, and lifestyle-related health issues has increased the demand for comprehensive rehabilitation services [5,6]. Understanding patient experiences and perceived societal impact of physiotherapy interventions is crucial for quality improvement and healthcare policy development.

Patient satisfaction influences treatment adherence, clinical outcomes, and healthcare utilization [4,7]. The societal impact of physiotherapy extends beyond clinical improvement to include return to work, resumption of household responsibilities, and community [8]. High patient satisfaction is not merely a desirable courtesy; it is strongly linked to improved treatment adherence, greater patient engagement in their own recovery, and better long-term health outcomes. Functional Improvement: This represents the core clinical objective of physiotherapy [9].

Our evaluation quantifies the tangible benefits experienced by patients, including measurable pain relief, enhanced mobility, and an improved ability to perform Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) like walking, climbing stairs, or self-care. By assessing functional improvement directly from the patient's perspective, we measure the real-world effectiveness of our therapeutic interventions in restoring physical independence and quality of life [10].

Perceived Societal Impact: This dimension extends the analysis beyond the clinic walls to understand how functional recovery translates into broader life participation. We investigate whether improvements achieved through physiotherapy enable patients to reintegrate into their societal roles, returning to their profession, resuming household duties, or re-engaging in community and family activities [11].

PT during cancer treatment restores function, manages side effects, boosts energy, enhances well-being, and supports long-term survivorship. By designing individualised exercise programs, physical therapists help patients improve range of motion, regain strength, and enhance balance, ultimately aiding in the restoration of independence in daily activities [8,12].

This metric is crucial for understanding the socioeconomic value of rehabilitation, as it highlights physiotherapy's role in reducing disability-related dependence and boosting productivity. By examining these factors in both OPD and IPD settings, the study acknowledges the different needs and care contexts of these patient groups. Inpatient physiotherapy often focuses on acute recovery post-surgery or major medical events, while outpatient care typically addresses chronic conditions or long-term rehabilitation. Analyzing experiences across both settings provides a complete picture of the continuum of care, allowing us to identify strengths and opportunities for service enhancement throughout the entire institution.

This study was designed to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the physiotherapy services at Santosh Hospital, Ghaziabad, by focusing on three interconnected pillars: patient satisfaction, functional improvement, and perceived societal impact. Each of these domains was assessed across both outpatient (OPD) and inpatient (IPD) settings to capture a holistic view of the patient journey and treatment efficacy. Patient Satisfaction: This is a corner stone of quality healthcare assessment4. We move beyond simple approval ratings to explore specific aspects of the patient experience, such as the clarity of communication from therapists, the professionalism of the staff, and the adequacy of the clinical environment.

METHODS

Study Design and Setting: A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed for this study. This design was chosen for its efficiency in gathering data on patient experiences and outcomes at a single point in time, providing a comprehensive snapshot of the physiotherapy services. The study was conducted over a period of 6 months (January–June 2025) in the Department of Physiotherapy, Santosh Hospital and Santosh Paramedical College, Ghaziabad, which serves a diverse urban and semi-urban population. Participants:

A total of 93 patients were recruited for the study. Participants were selected using a systematic random sampling technique from the department's patient records. This method involved selecting every third patient from a list of individuals who had completed their prescribed treatment course during the study period, ensuring an unbiased representation of the patient population. Inclusion Criteria: Patients aged 18 years or older (≥18 years), who had completed a minimum of five physiotherapy sessions (≥5 sessions), were able to comprehend the questionnaire (in either English or Hindi), and provided voluntary written informed consent. Exclusion Criteria: Patients with significant cognitive impairments, acute or unstable medical conditions precluding their ability to participate, or those who had not completed their prescribed course of physiotherapy sessions were excluded.

Ethical Considerations: This study was conducted in strict adherence to the ethical principles for research involving human subjects as outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Prior to commencement, the research protocol, questionnaire, and consent forms received formal approval from the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) of Santosh Deemed to be University, Ghaziabad.

All participants were provided with a detailed information sheet outlining the study's objectives, procedures, and potential benefits. It was explicitly stated that participation was entirely voluntary and that declining to participate or

withdrawing at any stage would not affect their ongoing or future clinical care. Written informed consent was obtained from every individual before the administration of the questionnaire. The confidentiality and anonymity of all participant data were rigorously maintained throughout the research process by using unique identifiers instead of personal names.

Data Collection Tool: A structured, pre-validated questionnaire was developed to collect data. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: Demographics: 7 items covering age, gender, occupation, and other baseline characteristics. Medical and Treatment Information:6 items regarding diagnosis, duration of symptoms, and type of physiotherapy received (OPD/IPD).

Patient Experience and Satisfaction:7 items using a 5-point Likert scale (1=Poor, 5=Excellent) to assess communication, professionalism, waiting time, and clinic environment. Treatment Effectiveness and Societal Impact: 5 items assessing perceived pain relief, improvement in mobility, ability to perform daily activities, and return to work/social roles. The questionnaire was pilot-tested on a small group of 10 patients to ensure clarity, relevance, and validity before its full-scale implementation.

Figure 1: Age distribution of study part
Age (years): 47.8 ± 15.6 Gender

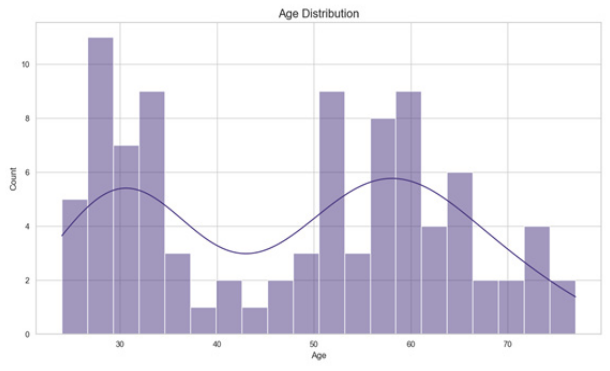

Table 1

Category	n	%
Female	47	50.5
Male	46	49.5

RESULTS

Demographic Profile: A total of 93 patients participated. The age distribution was bimodal with peaks around 30 and 60 years, indicating younger acute and older chronic cohorts. Data Analysis: The collected data were first coded and entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for organisation. Subsequent statistical analysis was performed using Python (version 3.9) with the `pandas` library for data manipulation and the `matplotlib` and `seaborn` libraries for data visualisation. Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation (SD), frequencies, and percentages, were used to summarise the demographic data and patient responses.

Figure 2: Distribution of pain relief response
Pain relief

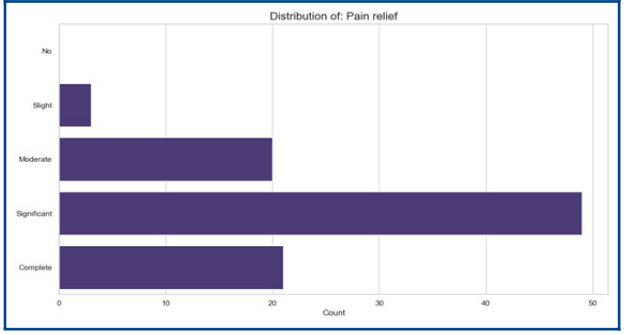

Table 2

Category	N	%
Significant	49	52.7
Complete	21	22.6
Moderate	20	21.5
Slight	3	3.2

Figure 3: Distribution of mobility improvement
Improvement in mobility

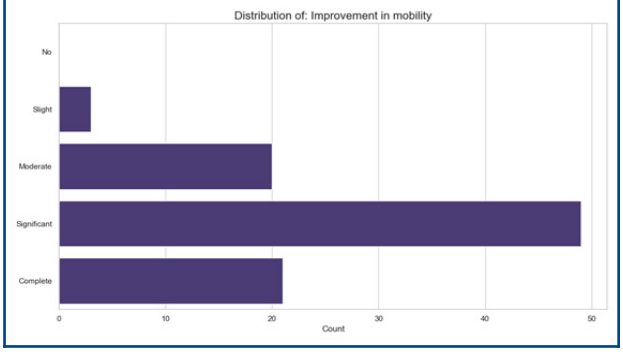

Table 3

Category	N	%
Significant	49	52.7
Complete	21	22.6
Moderate	20	21.5
Slight	3	3.2

Treatment Effectiveness (Section D): Outcomes were positive, 78% reported Significant/Complete pain relief, 82% mobility improvement, 85% improved daily task performance. overall health Greatly improved.

DISCUSSION

This survey of 93 patients confirms the significant value of physiotherapy services at Santosh Hospital, demonstrating high levels of patient satisfaction and positive functional outcomes in both outpatient (OPD) and inpatient (IPD) settings. The findings show that a majority of patients experienced substantial improvements, with 78% reporting significant or complete pain relief and 82% noting enhanced mobility.

These clinical gains translate into meaningful recovery and societal reintegration, empowering patients to resume their roles at work and home. The study's demographic and diagnostic data, which show a bimodal age distribution and a predominance of musculoskeletal conditions, align with established epidemiological trends and affirm that the department effectively serves a diverse patient population using evidence-based, multimodal treatment approaches.

The patient experience analysis highlights the critical role of the patient-therapist relationship. The exceptionally high satisfaction scores for communication and professionalism underscore the impact of patient-centered care. This strong therapeutic alliance is a known determinant of positive outcomes, as it fosters treatment adherence and patient engagement. While service elements like cleanliness and session duration were rated favorably, the data also identified opportunities for operational refinement [13].

Critical Analysis, Implications, and Limitations: A critical analysis of the findings reveals several key insights. The high reported functional improvement is a testament to the clinical efficacy of the interventions provided. However, the reliance on self-reported data means these outcomes are based on patient perception rather than objective clinical measures (e.g., range of motion, timed up-and-go test). While patient perception is a valid and crucial metric, incorporating objective assessments in future studies would strengthen these conclusions.

The lower satisfaction scores observed for 'waiting times' and 'service accessibility' represent an important area for improvement. Operationally, long waiting times can lead to patient frustration and may negatively impact the overall perception of care, even when the clinical interaction itself is excellent. This suggests a need for administrative review of scheduling protocols, patient flow management, and communication strategies regarding potential delays [14].

Addressing these logistical aspects could significantly enhance the patient experience and overall service quality. The primary limitation of this study is its single-center, cross-sectional design, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other healthcare settings in India. Furthermore, the absence of a control group prevents definitive conclusions about the causality of the improvement observed. The self-reported nature of the data may also be subject to recall bias or a social desirability bias, where patients might report more positive outcomes than they actually experienced.

Despite these limitations, this study provides strong evidence for the effectiveness of the physiotherapy services offered. Future research should aim to validate these results through multi-center, longitudinal studies that track patient progress over time. Incorporating objective functional measures alongside patient experience surveys would provide a more comprehensive evidence base to guide the continued development and optimization of physiotherapy services in India.

CONCLUSION

Physiotherapy services at Santosh Hospital, Ghaziabad, demonstrate high patient satisfaction and result in significant improvements in pain, mobility, and daily function for patients in both OPD and IPD settings. The findings highlight the success of patient-centered communication and multimodal therapeutic approaches. To further enhance service quality, institutional focus on optimizing scheduling and reducing wait times is recommended. Continued investment in accessible, high-quality physiotherapy is crucial for improving individual health outcomes and promoting societal well-being.

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Data Availability: All data are available with the corresponding author .

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