

# The Effect of Physical Therapy Programs on the Quality of Life

## Introduction

Physical exercise has always been known to improve the quality of life of people in general however Physical Therapy Programs are effective in improving the quality of life of people who suffer from long time ailments. Some diseases impact on the human body in such a manner, that it could rob the individual of enjoying a healthy life. It is at this juncture that Physical Therapy plays a major role by helping to improve the quality of life of those impacted by disease. In this essay, an attempt is being made as to how and to what extent physical therapy lends itself to improve one's quality of life. In the background of the study, an investigation would be done about how physical therapy is useful to bring back a good quality of life to people impacted by disease. This would be followed by current research that shows the present trends that have been improved by science and technology and how it serves to improve the prospect of physical therapy on patients and how this in turn impacts on the community at large by benefiting them.

## Background of the study

The peer-reviewed study I have chosen for discussion is titled "Effects of Various Physical Therapy Programs on the Quality of Life..." written by Dalia Mickevičienė et al., (2014) The article is very informative as it is interesting because it deals with poor health problems with a special focus on Parkinson's disease and how it impacts the life of the individual by limiting movement and slowing down their communication capabilities. The paper deals with research carried out in the field, and highlight facts of how Physical Therapy Programs serve to improve the quality of life of such individuals and helps them enjoy a better standard of living.

This research study was specifically carried out for patients suffering from Parkinson's disease which is an incurable, chronic, neurodegenerative disorder that is characterized by tremors and "affects the human nervous system." (Tomlinson, et al., 2012) It usually occurs in the older population and limits human movement thereby reducing their quality of life to a great extent. Some of the major problems faced by these patients are balancing disorders, decrease in mobility, sleep and dysphagia, increase in fatigue and depression, cognitive dysfunction, communication problems, disruption of day to day activities and in addition, these factors are controlled by heavy and continued medication that serves to weaken their body still further. People suffering from this dreaded disease find it difficult to manage on their own and require extensive rehabilitation.

The study showed that through rehabilitation, such people could enjoy a much better quality of life. The study believed that Physical therapy was very important because it served to have a positive impact on them and make them more mobile by improving their motor functioning depending on how far the disease has progressed. (Filippin et al., 2010; Earhart, Williams, 2012) Research found that Physical Therapy also helped patients with acquiring better balance, in addition to kinematics involving accuracy and speed during performance. Before beginning the Physical Therapy course, the subjects were asked to fill out a questionnaire in order to assess the level of progress of the disease in relation to their balance, speed, accuracy and movement. The subjects of the study were divided into groups and were engaged in a series of physical therapy activities such as individual workouts, treadmill walking and lifting weights at the gym, walking, Up and Go tests etc. To measure the static and dynamic balance, the Berg Balance Scale was used in addition to the Balance Confidence Scale. Results proved that the quality of life significantly improved after going through 16 physiotherapy procedures. On assessment of the patients it was found that they had better balance and their kinematics movement involving speed and accuracy was much higher now than before the therapy was applied, proving that Physical Therapy had a great impact as it was very effective and served to improve the quality of life of people suffering from a neurodegenerative disease.

## Current Research

Current research shows that more advanced interventions are being developed in the area of Physical Therapy. According to (Keus S H., et al., 2007) Six specific core areas which were posture, transfers, balance, gait, reaching out and grasping and physical capacity was identified and physical therapy was used to improve them. Current strategies used were cueing methods to improve gait, cognitive movement methods for improving transfers, increasing muscle power and joint mobility for better physical capacity, weight training was used and for better balance physical exercis

es were recommended. According to (Sullivan et al., 2007 & Wolf et al., 2008) “Task specific training proved to be more effective than traditional exercises to improve functional performance in individuals with neurological disorder s...”.

### Impact on the Community

At the community level, Physical Therapists play a very pivotal role in helping to promote good health to the members through their various Wellness Programs. Physical therapy has a very positive impact on the community by way of helping to prevent, treat and manage the impairments and health care needs of individuals within any community by improving their health and helping them enjoy a better quality of life. Some of the services offered to the community by Physical therapists are preventing or limiting physical disability brought about by injury or disease and restoring good health through physical therapy programs and ensuring better health to patients to enjoy a higher quality of life. Through rehabilitation techniques such as Physical Therapy, they help the sick members of the community to get over their chronic conditions and lead more productive lives.

### Utility for Career Choice

As a career choice, I feel that a Physical Therapist is quite in demand these days and therefore makes it a good choice. When compared to their peers in allied health arenas, a well qualified physical therapists have career pathways that are not only lucrative but highly satisfying because it involves fitting hand in glove with human beings and the health care system. The aging and ailing population is a continuous one and the reason for immense satisfaction lies in the fact that Physical Therapists are in a position to render quality care by relieving other human beings from pain or prolonged illness and restoring good health to extend their lifespan and enable them enjoy a better quality of life.

### References

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