

PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE OF PHYSIOTHERAPY

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The world confederation of Physical therapy (WCPT), which is a renowned global organization for physical therapy defines physiotherapy as " providing services to people and population to develop, maintain and restore maximum movement and functional ability throughout the life span.

OTPT Council, Mumbai, Maharashtra, which was formed in 2003 defines PT as "Physiotherapy" means a branch of modern medical science which includes examination, assessment, interpretation, physical diagnosis, planning and execution of treatment and advice to any person for the purpose of preventing, correcting, alleviating and limiting dysfunction, acute and chronic bodily malfunction including life saving measures via chest physiotherapy in the intensive care units, curing physical disorders or disability, promoting physical fitness, facilitating healing and pain relief and treatment of physical and psychosomatic disorders through modulating physiological and physical response using physical agents, activities and devices including exercise, mobilization, manipulations, therapeutic ultrasound, electrical and thermal agents and electrotherapy for diagnosis , treatment and prevention.^[1]

PT is concerned with identifying and minimizing movement potential within the spheres of promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

The history of physiotherapy dates back to 460 BC, where physicians like Hippocrates and Later

Galenus are believed to have been the first practitioners of physiotherapy advocating massage, manual therapy techniques and hydrotherapy to treat patients.

Later by 1500s, 1600s and 1700s, in Europe the use of exercise to treat muscle and bone disorders and disabilities progressed, by 1800s with development of orthopedics, machines like gymnasticon were developed to treat gout and similar diseases.

Physiotherapy developed as a profession in U.S during the 1st world war between 1914 to 1917, it was developed in response to the need to treat soldier's injuries as a result of war.

In 1950 Dr. Mulla Feroz, orthopedic Surgeon of COH, Mumbai was the first one to start physiotherapy and surgical services to disabled children in India.^[2]

With time physiotherapy evolved & developed, this dynamic evolution made physiotherapists develop educational and training programs that lead to physiotherapy become a profession. Government of Maharashtra through ACT- II of 2004 notified in state gazette that physiotherapy profession is an independent profession. The 31st Report of standard committee on health, Rajyasabha & Planning commission of India also recommended same.

Presently Physiotherapy has stretched its hands in various specialties such as acute care, Aquatic Physiotherapy, cardiopulmonary physiotherapy, wound management, geriatrics, hand rehab, neurology, oncology, orthopedics, pediatrics, sports PT, womens health, administration, research etc.

Physiotherapy has evolved to treat not only multiple types of diverse injuries, but also to prevent the debilitation associated with a multitude of disease process.



Today physician and surgeons no longer are dictating specifically what the physiotherapist should do with a patient, but rather are leaving the evaluation and treatment decisions to the knowledge and discretion of the physiotherapists.^[3]

As per the ACT – II of 2004, only a registered physiotherapist of state council has the right to plan, modify, execute and terminate physiotherapy treatment.

According to APTAs vision, the excellence in development of PT profession lies in the key element of

- Autonomous practice
- Direct access
- Doctor of PT Evidence –based practice
- Practitioner of choice
- Professionalism

In the end I would like to tell all my fellow physiotherapists that we should work to take physiotherapy profession to all new level of development by increasing the thirst of knowledge and excellence. As it was rightly said by Alber Einstine, learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for today, the important thing is not to stop questioning.

References :

1. "Policy statement: Description of physical therapy". World Confederation for Physical Therapy.
2. "Discovering Physical Therapy". American Physical Therapy Association. Archived from the original on 31 October 2007. Retrieved 29 May 2008.
3. "Physical Therapists". US Department of Labor. Retrieved 24 February 2011.