

Abstract

Introduction: Physiotherapy greatly impact on improving quality of life and supports to improve injury, illness or disability through movement and exercise, manual therapy, education and advice for people of all ages. Further, it helps patients to manage pain and prevent diseases. Also, the need for rehabilitation care is increasing, in which physiotherapy can play a significant role.

Objective: To describe the factors associated with utilization of physiotherapy services in Police hospital, Colombo -05, Sri Lanka.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at the physiotherapy unit of Police Hospital, Colombo over a two months period from March 2018 to April 2018. The study consisted of a desk review of the patients who visited the physiotherapy unit at Police Hospital, Colombo for the last ten years from 2008, and a survey of those patients who visited the physiotherapy unit at Police Hospital (n=242), Colombo for eight weeks from March 2018. In addition focus group discussions were conducted with physiotherapists and the medical officers who work in the medical, surgical, out-patient department and intensive care units. A checklist, an interviewer-administered questionnaire and moderator question guides were used to collect the data. Data was analyzed by using statistical package for social sciences software.

Results: Comparing with the national standards, the space, cleanliness and security were adequate, while almost all essential equipment were available in the physiotherapy unit for providing the service. Relevant training and development opportunities were low. Appraisal, discipline and awarding of rewards were not carried at all in the unit. The majority of the study participants were in the age groups of 40-49 years (n=79; 34.5%) and were males (n=145; 63.3%). Out of all

study participants who participated, 34.1% (n=78) had a monthly family income of 40,001-50,000 rupees and 130 (56.8%) study participants were completed GCE A/L. Most of the study participants (n=170,74.2%) were employed, out of them, 152 employed in the Police Department.

From 2008 to 2017, the highest number of patients attended was in 2011, but the highest treatment offered was in 2010.

Conclusions and recommendations: Most of the study participants (n=225, 98.3%) had a good perception of the utilization of physiotherapy services. After controlling the other covariates, the treatment continuation was significantly associated with male sex (OR=1.3); a higher level of education (OR=1.08), higher income of Rs. 20,001-50,000 (OR=2.05) and Above Rs. 50,000 (OR=1.83) and presence of comorbidities (OR=1.02). Thus, higher educated, male patients with higher income tend to receive the service at the physiotherapy unit at the Police Hospital. These findings were as expected since this facility is exclusively for the police department employees and their dependents.

Increasing of the functional space, good housekeeping and rearranging the service provision area is recommended. Human resource management should be strengthened with special reference improving training and development opportunities; improving service appraisal, and awarding of rewards. Increasing awareness on available physiotherapy services among MOs by getting them to attend periodic continuous professional development should be encouraged. Strengthening physiotherapy services by targeting for those above 40 years and increasing awareness of the services available for them is also recommended.

Key words: disability, physiotherapy, utilization of healthcare