

Is Freelancer an appropriate word to describe the "nature of practice or type of practice" of a Physiotherapy Clinical Practitioner?

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Abstract

Introduction: In India, approximately 30% of physiotherapists describe their work as "freelance." Because of these misconceptions, many patients are hesitant to consult such Physiotherapists Freelancers. The aim of this study is to learn how Physiotherapists perceive this term and how they react when they need to consult a doctor for their healthcare needs.

Methodology: This study included 215 physiotherapists from various roles, domains, designations, and work experiences from across India. A two-item questionnaire was used to collect data on the decision-making process for choosing whom to consult when in need for themselves or family members.

Results: For the analysis, data from 200 respondents was used. 90% of physiotherapists said they would consult with a full-time practitioner. Less than 5% choose to consult a Freelancer, while the remaining 5% remain silent or respond as not sure.

Conclusion: The study's findings highlighted the conclusion as the use of the "freelancer" for Physiotherapy Clinical Practitioners creates misunderstandings and ambiguity in the minds of patients seeking physiotherapy services, and as a result, such professionals are not chosen as their first choice for physiotherapy services.

Keywords: Physiotherapist designation, Physiotherapy role, profile, designation, Physiotherapy nature of practice, Physiotherapy career, Physiotherapy private practice

Introduction:

Physiotherapy has long been recognized as a popular mode of treatment that reduces patients' disability and dependency rate (Cooperman, 2008). However, it is still lacking in recognition among multidisciplinary healthcare professionals and the patient community. Every third person on the planet will require Physiotherapy services at some point in their lives. Despite this high demand, the flow of patients at private practitioners is very low (Briggs & Mueller, 2012).

They typically use this term to inform patients and other healthcare professionals that they are a freelance physiotherapy care provider (Grey & Rawlinson, 2013). People have a lot of misconceptions about freelancers, such as they work in their spare time, they work on casual roles, Freelancers don't answer to anyone, Freelancers don't work as hard as everyone else, Freelancing is not legit, people work as freelancers because they can't get a regular job, and so on (Mason, 2013). When there is already a lack of awareness among the community and healthcare professionals about physiotherapy practice, our nature of practice plays a critical role in determining the physiotherapist's commitment to their profession and patients (Leavitt, 2005)(Behrens, 2013).

Unfortunately, it has been observed that many healthcare professionals, including surgeons, have been influenced by these misconceptions and have expressed concern when referring their patients to freelance physiotherapists (Irnich, 2013). The aim of this study is to learn how Physiotherapists perceive this term and how they react when they need to consult a doctor for their healthcare needs.

Methodology:

This study included 215 physiotherapists from various roles, domains, designations, and work experiences from across India. A two-item questionnaire was used to collect data on the decision-making process for choosing whom to consult when in need for themselves or family members. The physiotherapists who enrolled themselves for session "5D10X Growth for Physiotherapists," program were asked to fill the questionnaire with two questions.

1. Do you work as "Freelancer"

Yes

No

For which the received responses were consistent, namely that over a quarter of physiotherapists use this term as their current nature of practice.

Then the below question follows .

If you or your family member is not well and you have an option to consult one of the following doctor whom do you choose

Full Time Practitioner

Freelancer

Not sure

Result:

During the registration process for 5D10X Growth for Physiotherapists, it was discovered that over 26 percent of Physiotherapists' nature of practice is "Freelance." They use this term to promote themselves as Physiotherapy Service Providers to the patient community and other referring healthcare professionals.

What is your Current role

215 responses

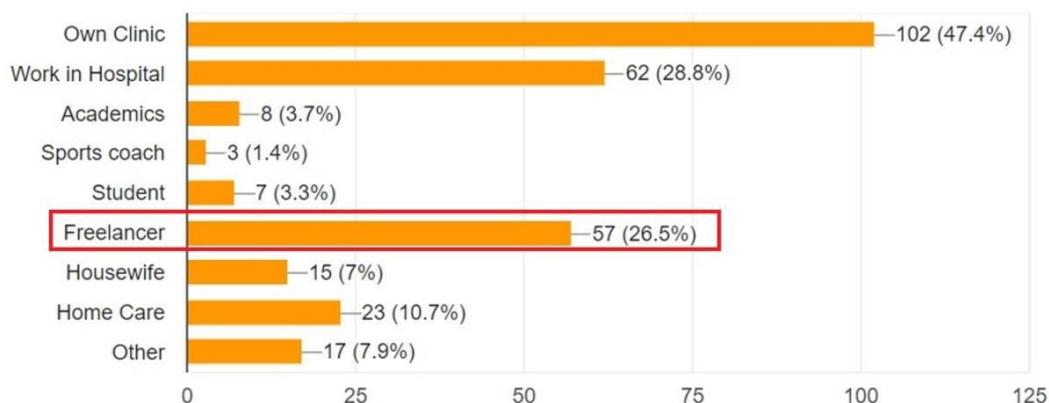


Figure 1. Statistical representation of the questionnaire

This phrase is becoming more popular these days. Despite conducting over 1000 interviews in the last 12 years, we did not believe this word was appropriate for Clinical Practitioner as an employer and provider of clinical care services.

90% of physiotherapists said they would seek the advice of a Full-Time Practitioner. Less than 5% choose to consult a Freelancer, while the remaining 5% choose to remain silent or respond as Not Sure.

Discussion:

This clearly shows that if a Physiotherapist does not want to see a Freelancer for themselves or their families, how can the patient community choose to see a Freelancer? As a result, by using that type of approach to promote their practice, physiotherapists are harming their own image, foregoing an opportunity to learn and earn money, and foregoing an opportunity to treat patients (Leavitt, 2005). The community will be misled with any of the aforesaid misconception. This will stifle the advancement of individual physiotherapists as well as the practice of physiotherapy as a whole (Dejung & Irnich, 2013).

According to Wikipedia, this term is most commonly used in Culture and Creative industries like music, writing, acting, computer programming, web design, translating, and illustrating, film and video production, and other forms of work that some cultural theorists consider to be central to the cognitive –cultural economy (Schmitt et al., 2013). According to the preceding text, "a Practitioner should not use this term when providing physiotherapy treatment to patients."

Conclusion:

Using the "freelancer" designation for Physiotherapy Clinical Practitioners creates ambiguity in the minds of patients seeking physiotherapy services, and as a result, they do not choose such professionals as their first choice for physiotherapy services. Physiotherapists should avoid using this "freelancer" Designation for their Clinical Practice.

Instead of Freelancer, Physiotherapists alternatively can use the designation as “ Clinical Practitioner, Physiotherapist, Senior Physiotherapist, Home Care Specialist, Consultant Physiotherapist, Tele-Physiotherapist depending on the type/mode of therapy they chose to provide

Furthermore, there's nothing wrong with using the term "freelancer" if a medical practitioner is active in any form of writing profession, such as Medical Transcripts, or working on some blogs, communication media via chat bots through some websites, etc.

Limitation:

As per the findings for clinical practitioners, the academicians and the researchers are also having such misleading terms which can be analyzed in future scope of the study.

Author’s Contribution: All authors contributed equally to the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding Source: The research has not received any external funding.

Acknowledgement: We thank the participants who participated and contributed samples to the study.

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