THE FUTURE OF PHYSIOTHERAPY IN SOUTH AFRICA

ABSTRACT: A brain drain in the physiotherapy profession is a cause of major concern currently among physiotherapists in South Africa. The main aim of this study was to determine the future plans of 2nd to 4th year physiotherapy students registered at the three academic institutions in the Western Cape for the 1999 academic year. It also aimed at determining the reasons why graduates chose to stay or leave South Africa. The results of the study show that an overwhelming majority (86%) of the respondents considered leaving South Africa following graduation. The reasons listed for leaving included gaining experience, financial gain and job availability. It is hoped that the results of this study will stimulate relevant role players to investigate means of persuading our graduates to stay and work in the country.

SCHOOL SCREENING FOR SCOLIOSIS

ABSTRACT: School screening for scoliosis can be highly effective in detecting those relevant curvatures that would benefit most from the available conservative treatment at an advantageously early stage. The correct age group of adolescent females is targeted, and routine examination can be administered with relative ease.

The program is most accurate when performed with a primary Forward Bending Test, and in cases where scoliosis is suspected, a second screening using either the Forward Bending examination or a scoliometer reading is recommended before referral to a co-operating medical team. It is convenient, and suitably accurate following brief training, for the first two tests to be conducted by the school’s nurse or physical education staff.

Screening at schools allows for early diagnosis of scoliosis, allowing maximum benefit and prognosis to be obtained as a result of the subsequent non-operative treatment. Boston braces have presented the highest rates of compliance and have thus yielded some of the most beneficial results of management by bracing. A treatment is deemed successful if the progression of the curvature has been stopped, and this occurs with the majority of cases that are detected whilst they are in the early stages. The prognosis of scoliosis is therefore improved by conservative treatment measures.

The cost of implementing a school screening program is justified by its ability to decrease the morbidity of those adolescents who are affected by this disease. The programs are generally inexpensive, are not time consuming and are simple to administer. As much as 75% to 95% of AIS cases that require surgery could have avoided operative management through early diagnosis and treatment. As the screening projects encourage and implement the early detection of scoliosis, which can then be effectively managed, there is great value in the implementation and maintenance of these school screening programs.

CLIENT’S EXPERIENCES OF THEIR SHOULDER PAIN AND DISABILITY

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this qualitative study was to enhance understanding of what it is like to suffer from chronic shoulder pain from the perspectives of those living with the experience.

Unstructured interviews, using the open-ended question “tell us about your shoulder”, were used to allow the twelve clients to elaborate freely on their feelings and experiences. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. These transcriptions were coded and categorized. Five themes emerged from the categories: Pain, Activities, Emotional Responses, Relationships and Coping Mechanisms. These findings expand understanding about quality of life for clients living with chronic shoulder pain and disability.