

EDITORIAL

WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUES: THE CONTINUING APPEAL FOR WOMEN HEALTH PHYSICAL THERAPY PRACTICE IN PAKISTANQureshi S¹, Siddiqi FA², Awan WA³

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Women's health in its widest definition includes study of whole body particularly examining biological characteristics unique to women, with a focus on reproductive organs, body structure, hormones, childhood development and genetics.¹ In 2017, maternal mortality ratio was determined to be 211 deaths per 100,000 live birth globally and in Pakistan, the ratio was 186 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2021.^{2,3} Besides obstetrical health issues, Pakistani female are also facing gynecological maladies on a large scale as compared to other countries such as grade I and II pelvic organ prolapse that is likely to be managed through pelvic physical therapy as per National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines.⁴ Regrettably, the burden of disease is increased manifolds due to unavailability of expert women's health physical therapist.⁵ Like many countries, Pakistan is signatory to several international commitments till now to empower the women. To overcome the lacking, women's health issues should be fostered by a woman's health physical therapist.

A women health physical therapist evaluates, treats, and educates a woman throughout the stages of life starting from active child-bearing years, pregnancy, postpartum, perimenopause and post menopause.⁶ The area of practice has now spread to encompass all health concerns of a woman namely infertility, osteoporosis, fibromyalgia, rehabilitation following gynecological surgery, breast cancer rehabilitation, incontinence, dyspareunia, vulvodynia, pregnancy related musculoskeletal pain, lymphedema, wellness and exercise. A woman throughout the life span whether a childbearing woman, a menopausal, a young athlete or an elderly woman obtain benefit from women's health physical therapy (WHPT). The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) claims that conjoint care provided by physician and physical therapist can enormously improve treatment prognosis.⁷ An optimal quality of life for a woman can be ensured through clinical evaluation and assessment to plan physical therapy interventions incorporated with various modalities that are cautiously prescribed according to an individual's scenario.⁸

It is about time to emphasize WHPT practice throughout the country. There is a prolonged schedule to fulfil all fundamental components of women's health issues which demands the joint collaboration of health-care providers, governments, policy makers, and the overall population. This article shout-out to novice physical therapy professionals to get themselves enrolled in WHPT specialty degree for the betterment of women. It is the need of hour to incorporate the services of qualified and expert WHPT professional in large tertiary care hospitals whether public or private, so that the premium quality of medical services pertaining to women health is available to the masses of all walks of life.

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