Qualitative Analysis of Reflective Narratives of Physical Therapy Students Attempting to Implement Biopsychosocial Approaches to Care

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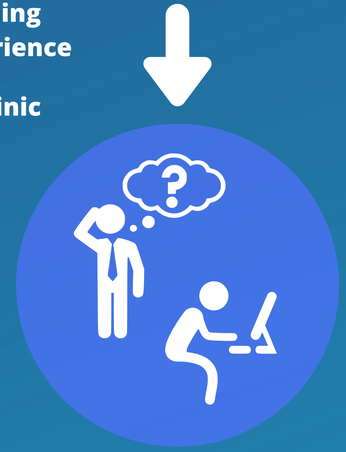
BACKGROUND

- Biopsychosocial (BPS) model targets the individual's pain experience by examining and addressing psychological, social and lifestyle factors in addition to potential biological causes
- An estimated 25 million adults experience chronic pain, but there is often no identifiable biological cause
- Research shows positive outcomes with the BPS model, but studies also show that BPS is difficult to learn and implement

METHODS

5 PT Students

Didactic training
Mentored experience
25 Reflections
Attempt in clinic
5 Reflections
Analysis



PHYSICAL THERAPY STUDENTS

EXPOSURE TO BPS MODEL

PERSON-CENTERED
- Patient Empowerment
- Self-Efficacy
- Active Listening

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE
- Difficulty Adapting
- Guidance Needed
- Biomedical Reliance

TREATMENT METHODS
- Exposure Techniques
- Lack of Experience
- Surprise

IMPLEMENTATION IN CLINIC

BARRIERS TO PRACTICE
- BPS Not Being Used
- Lack of Collaboration
- Difficulty in Acute Setting

PERSONAL CHALLENGES
- Uncertainty & Self-Doubt
- Tendency to Overthink
- Old Habits

BUILDING CONFIDENCE
- Value in Training
- Comfort with Ambiguity
- Continued Use of BPS

PURPOSE

To examine the learning process of physical therapy students attempting to apply BPS principles to clinical treatment during both an initial training period under mentorship, and during clinical rotations.

CONCLUSION

The BPS model of care should be an integral part of clinical practice, yet current training does not fully address barriers that complicate effective implementation as a PT student.
Didactic training alone is insufficient, comprehensive guided clinical experience is also necessary.

DISCUSSION

- Clear similarities emerged from narrative reflections on the challenges and successes of training
- Purely didactic learning did not immediately or easily transfer to competent use in the clinic
- Our results are supported by Holopainen et. al, 2020