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Attitudes Towards Musculoskeletal Pain Neuroscience Education of Undergraduate Physiotherapy Students in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Background and Objectives: Pain neuroscience education (PNE) has emerged as an effective method for managing musculoskeletal (MSK) pain by reconceptualising patients' perceptions of pain. However, the integration of PNE into physiotherapy education remains underexplored, particularly in Malaysia. This study aims to assess the attitudes of undergraduate physiotherapy students in Malaysia towards MSK PNE and compare these attitudes between undergraduate physiotherapy students in public and private universities in Malaysia. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study design was employed, utilising a structured questionnaire distributed to undergraduate physiotherapy students across universities in Malaysia. Descriptive statistics and non-parametric tests were used to determine attitudes towards PNE and to identify any significant differences between students from public and private universities. Two hundred sixtysix undergraduate physiotherapy students enrolled in public and private universities in Malaysia. **Results:** Overall, students showed a positive attitude towards PNE, with 82.3% supporting the inclusion of PNE in undergraduate physiotherapy curricula and 53.8% of them perceiving one-on-one sessions to be the most effective PNE delivery method. No significant differences were observed between public and private university students across most items. However, confidence in delivering PNE was low (Mean = 2.34, SD = 1.05) in both groups. PNE was generally perceived as moderately time-demanding, although higher among public university students, but only with a small effect size ($r = 0.12$). **Conclusion:** Students showed a positive attitude toward PNE but lacked confidence to deliver it. These findings suggest a need for better integration and practical training in undergraduate physiotherapy programs. This study is among the first to explore PNE attitudes in Malaysian physiotherapy education.

Keywords: Pain; Physiotherapy students; Attitudes; Pain neuroscience education

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