

AWARENESS OF PHYSICAL THERAPY AND QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG PEOPLE OF BALOCHISTAN

Dr. Kausar Baloch,
Physiotherapist at Body Experts,
Gulburg Branch, Karachi

Dr. Munaza Tanveer
Physiotherapist,
Civil Hospital Sukkur

Dr. Noman Ahmed
Professor/Principal,
Isra Institute of Rehabilitation Sciences,
Isra University Karachi Campus

ABSTRACT:

This study aimed to determine the awareness of physical therapy and its association with quality of life among the general population of Balochistan, Pakistan. A cross-sectional survey was conducted on 700 individuals using the Awareness of Physical Therapy Questionnaire, through which participants were categorized into adequate knowledge (>67%), fair knowledge (48–65%), and inadequate knowledge (<47%). Quality of life was assessed using the WHOQOL-BREF, evaluating physical, psychological, social, and environmental health domains. The quality of life scores were interpreted as very poor (0–20), poor (21–40), moderate (41–60), good (61–80), and very good (81–100). Data were analyzed using SPSS version 23 to obtain frequencies, percentages, and mean values. The results showed that only 46.4% of participants were aware of the role of physical therapy, while overall knowledge remained inadequate (<47%) regarding treatment modalities, specialties, and professional practice. The mean scores for quality of life domains were 49.00±10.43 for physical health, 56.48±14.77 for psychological health, and 55.23±18.24 for social relationships, indicating a moderate quality of life, whereas environmental health scored 36.23±21.34, indicating a poor quality of life. The study concluded that the population of Balochistan has limited awareness of physical therapy, and physical therapy services are not widely recognized. Increased public education and awareness programs are required to improve understanding of physical therapy and its role in enhancing quality of life.

Keywords: Awareness, Physical therapy, Quality of life, Balochistan

INTRODUCTION:

The people of Balochistan are primarily known as Baloch. They have a distinct cultural identity, with their own language, Balochi, and a rich history. The region has a diverse landscape, including deserts and mountains, influencing the traditional lifestyle of the Baloch people, who are often involved in activities like agriculture, herding, and trading. (1)A medical specialty called Physical Therapy focused on human mobility and function in order to help people reach their full potential. In addition to being a globally recognized profession, physiotherapy plays a significant role in the delivery of healthcare (2). Health care professionals play crucial and significant roles in enhancing the population's access to high-quality healthcare. Physical Therapists play a crucial role on the healthcare delivery team with other professionals like doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, psychologists, and chiropractors (3).The Chartered Society of Physical Therapy states that using a variety of Physical Therapy procedures, physiotherapists use their knowledge and expertise to treat a wide range of disorders related to multiple bodily systems, including the neurological, musculoskeletal, respiratory and cardiovascular systems(4).To assess and treat a wide range of illnesses, Physical Therapists employ therapeutic exercise, self-care education, manual therapy (including manipulation and mobilization), electrotherapy, the application of devices and equipment, etc. By avoiding diseases, promoting good health, and enhancing quality of life, the Physical Therapy profession plays a crucial role in the public health agenda (5).The lives of individuals can be significantly impacted by physical therapists. They support people in leading active lives, achieving their fitness goals, and regaining or maintaining their independence. (6).People can improve their quality of life with the helping hand of Physical Therapists and their assistants. They operate in a range of environments and with people of different ages and skill levels. They support patients in developing healthy behaviors, managing chronic diseases, recovering from severe injuries, and avoiding surgery and prescription medication. (7). In

order to treat pain, increase range of motion, address mobility concerns, heal from injuries, and stop further harm, a physical therapist designs customised exercises (8). Physical therapists usually work in hospitals, nursing homes, private offices, and clinics. Actively working with patients, they are on their feet for a large portion of the day (9). The term quality of life (QoL) refers to an individual's total well-being, which includes their physical surroundings, relationships, education, employment, social standing, wealth, safety, independence, autonomy, and sense of connection to others.(10). In the fields of health and medicine, the concept of quality of life (QOL) is crucial. QOL is a complicated topic that varies in how it is understood and defined across disciplines, including the fields of medicine and healthcare. In the fields of health and medicine, quality of life (QOL) has come to be recognized as a significant concept and goal. In medical and health studies, biological outcomes—rather than QOL outcomes—have traditionally been the main goals. However, in recent years, more research has concentrated on patients' QOL, and QOL assessments are being utilized more frequently. For better symptom treatment, patient care, and rehabilitation, it's crucial to understand QOL. Modifications may be made in response to issues that patients' self-reported QOL reveals. Because QOL is a prognostic factor and a predictor of treatment success, it is crucial for medical decision-making. For instance, it has been demonstrated that QOL is a powerful predictor of survival. This predictive capability suggests that clinical trials should routinely examine QOL(11). QoL is influenced by a variety of characteristics, including standard of life, education, GDP, economic formations, and population. It could be challenging to describe and define the quality of life. Numerous socioeconomic, equal treatment, health, and environmental concerns are addressed in these objectives. Starting with the complete eradication of poverty and moving towards greater health, living standards, and material advancements. Education and a free of carbon environment have an impact on people's lives, either directly or indirectly. In terms of quality of life, essential necessities like education, health, and a decent standard of living

must be met (12).A psychologist states that maintaining a healthy diet and exercising regularly help your body and brain manage stress, depression, and anxiety right away. Balance, ongoing improvement, and acceptance is essential for true wellbeing (13). Physical therapy enhances functional capacities, alleviates symptoms, and promotes general well-being, all of which greatly improve patients' quality of life. Additional sessions have been shown to improve functional outcomes and shorten hospital stays (14).Studies show that physical therapy interventions can significantly reduce postoperative pain, improving the quality of life for those who are impacted (15).For those with disabilities, amputations, or spinal cord injuries, physical therapy has been demonstrated to optimize independence and enhance quality of life. (16)

METHODOLOGY:

A cross-sectional study was conducted across different cities of Balochistan using convenient non-probability sampling, with a total sample size of 700 participants. The inclusion criteria comprised male and female individuals aged 20 to 60 years, both educated and uneducated, residing in Balochistan and experiencing pain related to conditions commonly managed by physical therapy. Individuals residing outside Balochistan were excluded from the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire assessing awareness of physical therapy (adapted from reference 18), which categorized participants into three groups: adequate knowledge (>67%), fair knowledge (48-65%), and inadequate knowledge (<47%). Quality of life was assessed using the WHOQOL-BREF instrument, measuring physical, psychological, social, and environmental health domains. Scores were categorized as very poor (0-20), poor (21-40), moderate (41-60), good (61-80), and very good (81-100) quality of life. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 to calculate descriptive statistics, including means and frequencies.

RESULT:

The mean age of participants was 31±416 years with 26.9% were male and 43.1% were female. The participants of different cities in Balochistan recorded in categories: 100 (14.3%) were from Khuzdar, 100 (14.3%) were from Quetta, 100 (14.3%) were from Awaran, 100 (14.3%) were from Hub, 100 (14.3%) were from Sohbatpur, 100 (14.3%) were from Jaffarabad, and 100 (14.3%) were from Naseerabad. Regarding awareness of physical therapy (Fig.1), 53% of the participants demonstrated inadequate knowledge, 29% had fair knowledge, and only 18% possessed adequate knowledge about physical therapy. These findings indicate that the majority of the study population had limited awareness of physical therapy and its role in healthcare.

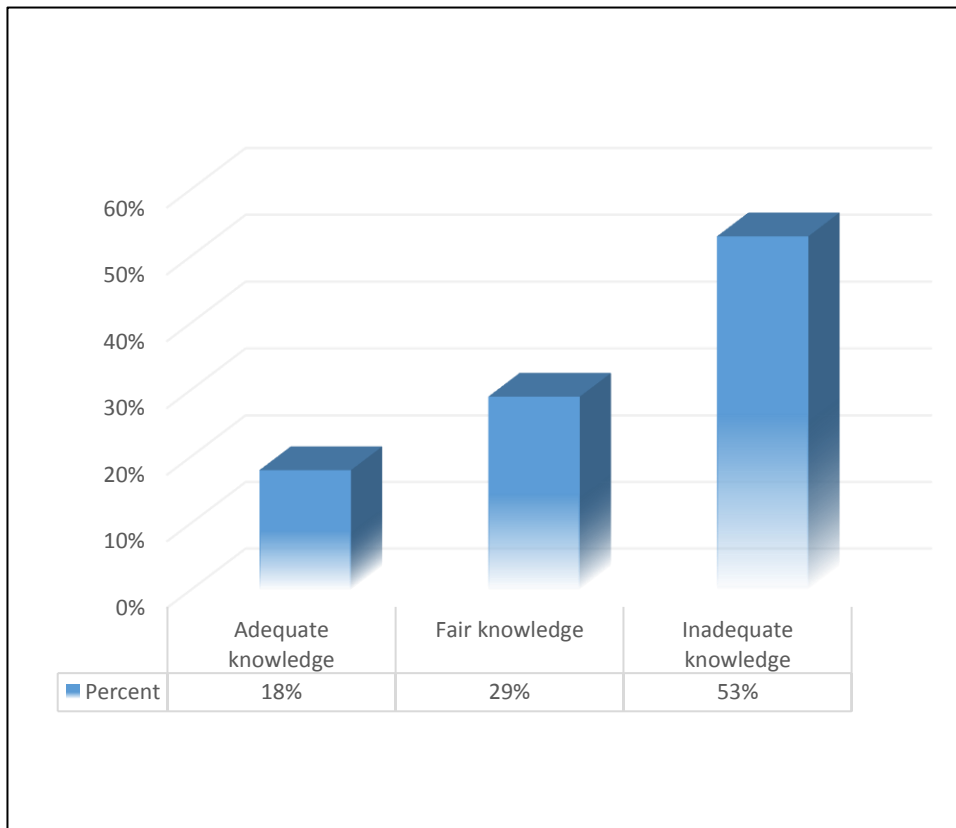


Figure-1: Awareness of Physical Therapy

The assessment of quality of life using the WHOQOL-BREF (Fig. 2.) revealed that the mean score of the physical health domain was 49.00, the psychological health domain was 56.48, and the social relationships domain was 55.23, all indicating a moderate quality of life among the participants. In contrast, the environmental health domain had a mean score of 36.23, which reflects a poor quality of life. Overall, the findings suggest that while participants demonstrated moderate well-being in physical, psychological, and social aspects, their environmental conditions were comparatively unsatisfactory.

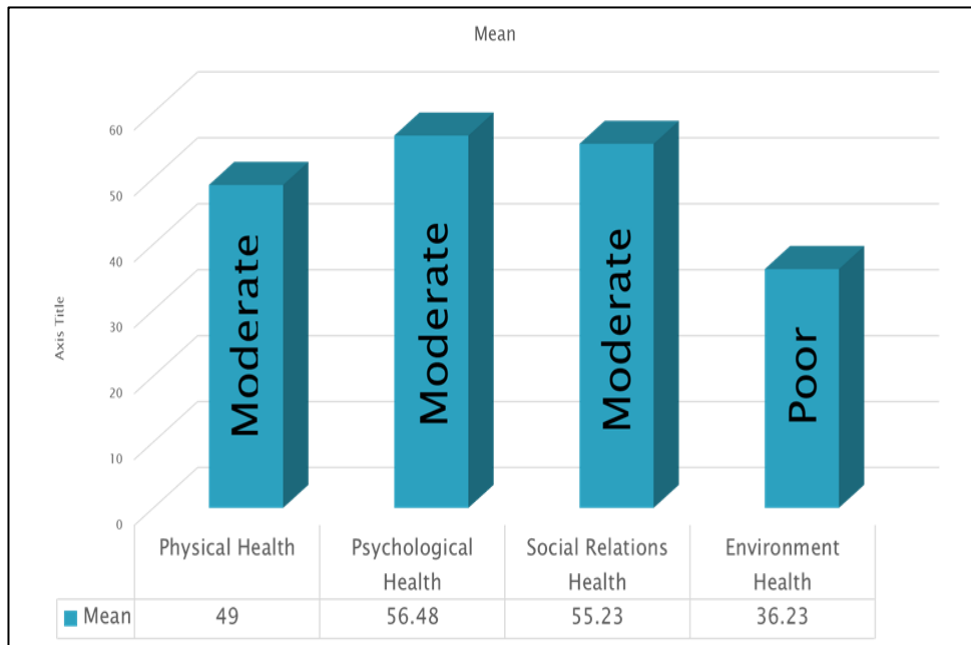


Figure-2: Quality of life

DISCUSSION:

In this study, we find out about awareness of physical therapy and quality of life among people in Balochistan. The findings of this research shed light on crucial concerns related to Balochistan's population's understanding of physical therapy and its impact on quality of life. The findings will contribute to the existing body of knowledge and provide recommendations to

enhance physical therapy services, increase awareness, and improve overall healthcare outcomes in the region. The study showed that there is a considerable lack of awareness regarding physical therapy in Balochistan. A significant portion of the population lacks a comprehensive understanding of the services provided by physical therapists, their role in healthcare, and the benefits of physical therapy in the treatment of various health conditions. The primary objective of the preceding study was to assess the knowledge and awareness of physical therapy among the general population in Gujranwala Division. The study involved 384 participants from urban and rural areas. A study found that urban areas had high knowledge and practice levels, while rural areas had moderate to low knowledge. The study found a strong association between education and physical therapy, with higher degrees significantly impacting people's awareness (1). The prior study conducted in Dharwad, Karnataka, India. In this survey, an examination was conducted among the urban and rural residents. A convenience sample of 2000 individuals was selected from both urban and rural areas of Dharwad. Data pertaining to awareness of physical therapy was collected through the administration of self-administered and pre-tested questionnaires. Notably, the findings unveiled a disparity in physical therapy awareness between health professionals and non-health professionals, with a statistically significant contrast observed between urban and rural professionals. Specifically, when compared to their rural counterparts, both health professionals and non-health professionals in urban areas exhibited a higher level of awareness regarding physical therapy" (17). Another study found out how senior secondary school students feel about the physical therapy profession in terms of awareness and perception. Participants' overall knowledge score of 48.0% revealed a lack of understanding of physical therapy practice, treatment modes, and specialization. The study's participants showed a high level of physical therapy knowledge. A manual should be developed to raise awareness and knowledge of physical therapy practice (18). This current study, conducted among the general population of Balochistan, found that

the knowledge of the Balochistan population was inadequate about physical therapy. 46.4% were aware of the role of physical therapy. Overall knowledge among the participants (<48.0%) indicated inadequate knowledge about physical therapy, treatment modalities, specialties, and practice. The prior study was conducted in Nigeria among career educators in secondary schools. The study's objective is to find out how secondary school educators feel about the physical therapy profession in terms of awareness and perception. Through a self-administered questionnaire, data on the degree of knowledge and awareness regarding physical therapy was gathered. The knowledge of physical therapy is around 95.5% among school-profession instructors. Physical therapy may be studied in a university, according to 77.6% of respondents; however, some people also think that it can be studied in polytechnics (4.1%), colleges of higher education (2.0%), and technical universities (6.1%). 49.0% were unaware of the proper subject combination, whereas 51.0% were aware of the necessary subject combination to be admitted to study physical therapy. In this study, secondary school profession educators showed a high degree of physical therapy knowledge. However, their understanding of the practice of physical therapy, treatment methods, specializations, and employability in organizations other than government-owned health facilities is still insufficient. While the majority of career educators (77%) are aware that physical therapy is studied at universities, just half are aware of the ideal subject combinations for entrance. This demonstrates that career educators lack sufficient awareness of the criteria for physical therapy admission. Findings on participants' knowledge of physical therapy showed that nearly all of them (91.8%) are aware that physical therapists are not masseurs. Likewise, 61.2% understand that physical therapy is not practiced by doctors. Results concerning career educators' understanding of physical therapy treatment techniques seem to be lacking. Most professional educators are unaware of how manual therapy, ice/heat treatment, and hydrotherapy are used to manage patients. According to responses regarding understanding of the use of physical therapy

for medical diseases other than sports injuries, pediatric medical conditions are the most well-known, followed by other subspecialties such as musculoskeletal and neurological conditions. The participants in this study's career educators were more likely to know (67.3%) that physical therapists work in government hospitals than in other settings, including private clinics, private hospitals, sports facilities, and non-governmental organizations (19). An assessment of utility scores and quality of life (QOL) in head and neck cancer survivors was conducted. The findings indicate that out of the 127 patients who participated, a substantial majority, 102 (80%), reported QOL scores below normative values. These results suggest that disability, as well as reduced health-related QOL and utility, are significantly influenced by the impact of both the disease and the treatment of head and neck cancer (20). A study investigated mental health status and life satisfaction among victims of sectarian violence and their families in Quetta, Balochistan. A sample of 200 participants (100 males and 100 females, aged 20–40 years) was assessed using the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21), and data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation. The findings indicated that depression, anxiety, and stress negatively affected life satisfaction, highlighting sectarian violence as a major source of psychological distress and a threat to social harmony in the province. (21) In contrast, the current study was conducted in Balochistan, Pakistan, among the general population. The aim of the study was to determine awareness of physical therapy practice. The significance of this study sheds light on significant concerns surrounding Balochistan's population's awareness of physical therapy and its effect on quality of life. Physical therapy greatly enhances the quality of life for the people of Balochistan by offering vital rehabilitation services and encouraging better health results. The present study evaluated the awareness of physical therapy and its relationship with quality of life among the general population of Balochistan. The findings revealed that a majority of participants (53%) had inadequate knowledge of physical therapy, while 29% demonstrated fair

knowledge and only 18% possessed adequate knowledge. These results indicate that physical therapy remains poorly recognized within the community. Limited awareness may be attributed to a lack of public education programs, insufficient promotion of rehabilitation services, and restricted access to qualified physical therapy professionals in many areas of Balochistan. Consequently, many individuals may not seek physical therapy services even when they could benefit from them. Quality of life assessment using the WHOQOL-BREF demonstrated moderate scores in the physical (49.00), psychological (56.48), and social relationship (55.23) domains. This suggests that although individuals are able to maintain average functional abilities and social interactions, their overall well-being is not optimal. The relatively better psychological and social scores may be influenced by strong family structures and social support systems commonly observed in local communities. However, the environmental domain showed a poor mean score (36.23), indicating dissatisfaction with living conditions, healthcare accessibility, financial resources, transportation, and recreational facilities. Environmental limitations may further contribute to reduced utilization of healthcare and rehabilitation services, including physical therapy. The lack of awareness about physical therapy may directly affect quality of life, as individuals who are unaware of rehabilitation services are less likely to seek early management for musculoskeletal pain, disability, or functional limitations. Early physical therapy intervention is known to improve mobility, reduce pain, and enhance daily functioning, which ultimately improves overall well-being. Therefore, the moderate quality of life observed in most domains and poor environmental conditions highlight the need for increased awareness campaigns, community education, and improved healthcare accessibility in Balochistan. Promoting the role of physical therapy through public health programs, media, and primary healthcare settings may enhance knowledge and encourage timely utilization of rehabilitation services, thereby improving the overall quality of life of the population.

CONCLUSION:

The general population has limited awareness and understanding of physical therapy, with the majority of participants demonstrating inadequate knowledge regarding its role, treatment modalities, and specialties. The assessment of quality of life indicated moderate well-being in the physical, psychological, and social domains, while the environmental domain reflected poor living conditions and limited access to healthcare resources. The findings suggest that insufficient awareness and accessibility of rehabilitation services may negatively influence health outcomes and daily functioning. Therefore, there is a need to implement public education and awareness programs, improve availability of physical therapy services, and integrate rehabilitation into primary healthcare settings in order to enhance knowledge and ultimately improve the quality of life of people living in Balochistan, Pakistan.

REFERENCES:

- Government of Balochistan. (n.d.). *About Balochistan*. Retrieved March 4, 2025, from <https://balochistan.gov.pk/about/about-balochistan/>
- Asghar, N., Awais, M., Gulzar, K., Mansha, H., Islam, F., & Tanveer, H. (2022). KAP survey of awareness of physiotherapy among urban and rural general population of Gujranwala Division. *Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences*, 53-57.
- Wilson, C. M., Stiller, C. H., Doherty, D. J., & Thompson, K. A. (2017). The role of physical therapists within hospice and palliative care in the United States and Canada. *American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine*[®], 34(1), 34-41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049909115615567>
- Birnkrant, D. J., Bushby, K., Bann, C. M., Alman, B. A., Apkon, S. D., Blackwell, A., Case, L. E., Cripe, L., Hadjiyannakis, S., Olson, A. K., & Sheehan, D. W. (2018). Diagnosis and management of Duchenne muscular dystrophy, part 2: Respiratory, cardiac, bone health, and orthopaedic management. *The Lancet Neurology*, 17(4), 347-361. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1474-4422\(18\)30025-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1474-4422(18)30025-5)
- Ramanandi, V. H., Panchal, D. N., Prabhakar, M. M., Shah, D. J., & Mavani, J. C. (2019). Awareness, attitude, belief, and utilization of physiotherapy services among the general public in major cities of Gujarat state. *Physiotherapy: The Journal of Indian Association of Physiotherapists*, 13(2), 95.
- Rohan, B., Davidson, C., Ramsay, K., Dominguez, J., Hanney, W. J., & Beato, M. C. (2021). Impact of hemisphere localization and the frequency of physical and occupational therapy sessions on functional independence of stroke

- patients in inpatient rehabilitation. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Practice*, 2(1), 4–9.
- Hawkins, T. (2001). *Careers in physical therapy*. Rosen Classroom. Retrieved June 21, 2023, from <https://www.apta.org/yourcareer/careers-in-physical-therapy>
- Cleveland Clinic. (n.d.). *Physical therapist (physiotherapist)*. Retrieved March 4, 2025, from <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/24625-physical-therapist>
- Teoli, D., & Bhardwaj, A. (2025). Quality of life. In *StatPearls*. StatPearls Publishing.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). *Physical therapists*. Retrieved March 4, 2025, from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physical-therapists.htm>
- Haraldstad, K., Wahl, A., Andenæs, R., Andersen, J. R., Andersen, M. H., Beisland, E., Borge, C. R., Engebretsen, E., Eisemann, M., Halvorsrud, L., & Hanssen, T. A. (2019). A systematic review of quality-of-life research in medicine and health sciences. *Quality of Life Research*, 28, 2641–2650. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-019-02214-9>
- Rahman, M. U., Asad, M., & Ahmad, W. (2020). Factors enhancing quality of life. *Global Economics Review*, 1, 325–335.
- The Wellbeing Project. (2022). *9 tested tips to improve your wellbeing and quality of life*. Retrieved June 21, 2023, from <https://wellbeing-project.org/9-tested-tips-to-improve-your-wellbeing-and-quality-of-life-post/>
- Peiris, C. L., Shields, N., Brusco, N. K., Watts, J. J., & Taylor, N. F. (2018). Additional physical therapy services reduce length of stay and improve health outcomes in people with acute and subacute conditions: An updated systematic review and meta-analysis. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 99(11), 2299–2312. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2018.03.030>
- Robinson, A., McIntosh, J., Peberdy, H., Wishart, D., Brown, G., Pope, H., & Kumar, S. (2019). The effectiveness of physiotherapy interventions on pain and quality of life in adults with persistent post-surgical pain compared to usual care: A systematic review. *PLOS ONE*, 14(12), e0226227. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0226227>
- South University. (n.d.). *The impact of physical therapy across the lifespan*. Retrieved March 4, 2025, from <https://www.southuniversity.edu/news-and-blogs/2023/11/the-impact-of-physical-therapy-across-the-lifespan>
- Shruti, T., Javali, S. B., Sunkad, M. A., & Math, C. M. (2022). Comparison of awareness of physiotherapy among health professionals and non-health professionals in Dharwad District, Karnataka, India: A survey analysis. *Indian Journal of Physical Therapy and Research*, 4(1), 41.
- Bolarinde, S. O., Owoyemi, T. V., Obaya, A., & Nanimebila, M. (2020). Awareness and perception of physiotherapy among senior students of selected secondary schools in a South-Western community of Nigeria. *Indian Journal of Physical Therapy and Research*, 2(1), 19.

- Bolarinde, S. O., Owoyemi, T. V., Obaya, A. O., & Nanimebila, M. (2020). Awareness and perception of physiotherapy practice among career educators in selected secondary schools in Nigeria. *Muller Journal of Medical Sciences and Research*, 11(2), 65-70.
- Liao, L. J., Hsu, W. L., Lo, W. C., Cheng, P. W., Shueng, P. W., & Hsieh, C. H. (2019). Health-related quality of life and utility in head and neck cancer survivors. *BMC Cancer*, 19(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12885-019-5401-9>
- Siddiqui, M., Riaz, S., Imdad, I., Ali, S., & Naudhani, T. (2023). CRISIS OF BALOCHISTAN EFFECT MENTAL HEALTH STATUS AND STIR LIFESATISFACTION OF SECTARIAN VICITMS. *Russian Law Journal*, 11(3), 2300-2306.