

# E-Health Literacy in Physiotherapist of Gujarat: A Survey

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## ABSTRACT

In Recent years, digitalization has taken over many industries including healthcare professions worldwide, and India is no exception. According to 'National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)' -Making India a Digital Health Nation Enabling Digital Healthcare for all Strategy Overview of JULY-2020 significant technical shift will occur in healthcare system in India and so there is need of the study to investigate whether healthcare providers and seekers are ready for this change or not. There are limited researches available in literature in this area hence need of study arises. The aim of present study is to investigate the level of E-health literacy in Physiotherapist practising in India.

**MATERIALS & METHODS:** Total 174 registered physiotherapist (123 females, 55 males) practicing in Gujarat participated in this survey. E-health literacy scale (Eheals) is a valid and reliable tool, it's a self-administered questionnaire which has 5 points from which best suitable option will be chose by responder from strongly agree/very useful to strongly disagree. 90% of physiotherapist believed that the internet is a useful and important tool in making decisions related to healthcare and for accessing health-related information. Regardless of the high percentage regarding the usefulness and importance of the internet, the ability and skills of finding and utilizing health care resources electronically was noted moderate to low.

**CONCLUSION:** E-health literacy was found moderate to low on Physiotherapist practicing in India. There are countless possibilities of further studies in this area with larger population size and various other components of E-health literacy.

**Keywords:** E-Health, Digitalization in healthcare, Physiotherapist

## INTRODUCTION

In Recent years, digitalization has taken over many industries including healthcare professions worldwide, and India is no exception.(1) According to 'National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)' -Making India a Digital Health Nation Enabling Digital Healthcare for all Strategy Overview of JULY-2020, with application of NDHM will remarkably enhance the effectiveness and translucency in health care system. health care providers and seekers will get easy and secure access to health-related documents such as patients' history, laboratory investigations, policy copies etc for patient's assessment treatments and follow ups. Hence, in current years a significant digitalization will take place in the health care system in India. (2)

Health, health literacy and E-health literacy are defined by various authors periodically. An individual's potential to acquire, interpret, utilize and act upon the available health related information is understood as health literacy and when this process is done electronically or digitally through various advices or internet it is understood as E-

health literacy. (1,3) Digitalization in health care system provides little value if the intended service providers and service users lack the ability and skills to effectively use the system. (4,5). It becomes significantly important to check whether the health care professionals are ready and efficient for this major change in health care system. In this area there is a lack of many studies hence the need of studies arises. The current study was aimed to evaluate the level of E-health literacy. E-health literacy scale (Eheals) is a valid and reliable tool, it's a self-administered questionnaire which has 5 points from which best suitable option will be chose by responder from strongly agree/very useful to strongly disagree. (6,7)

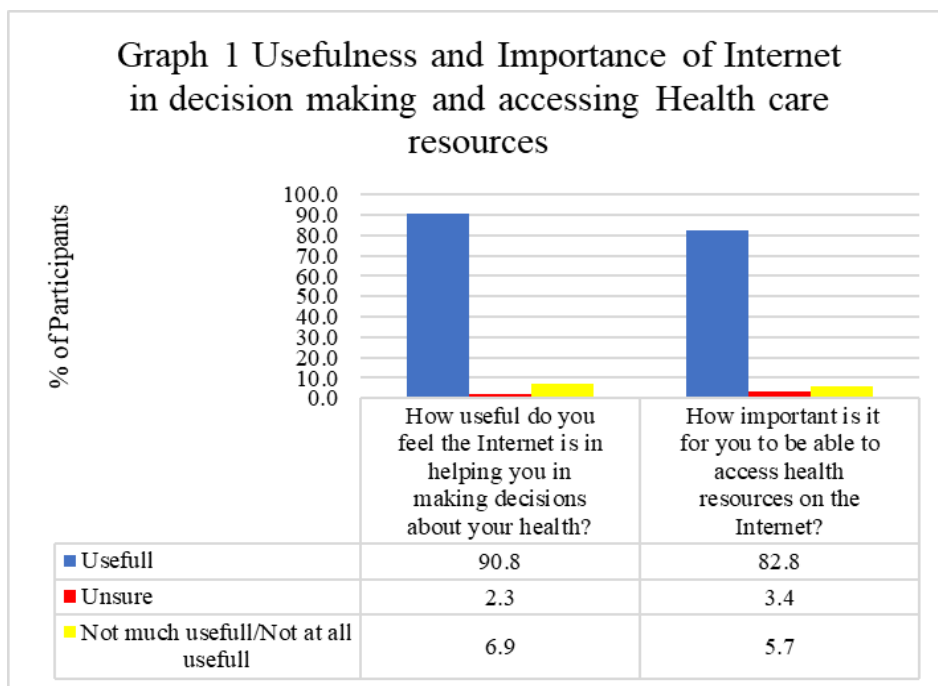
**MATERIALS & METHODS**

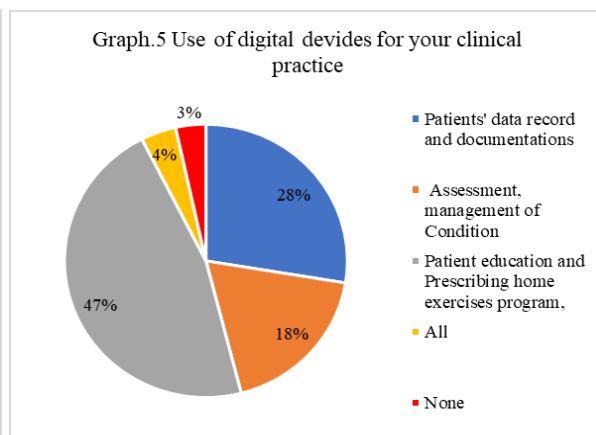
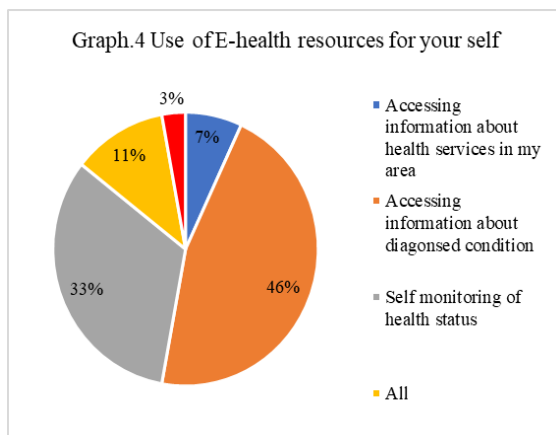
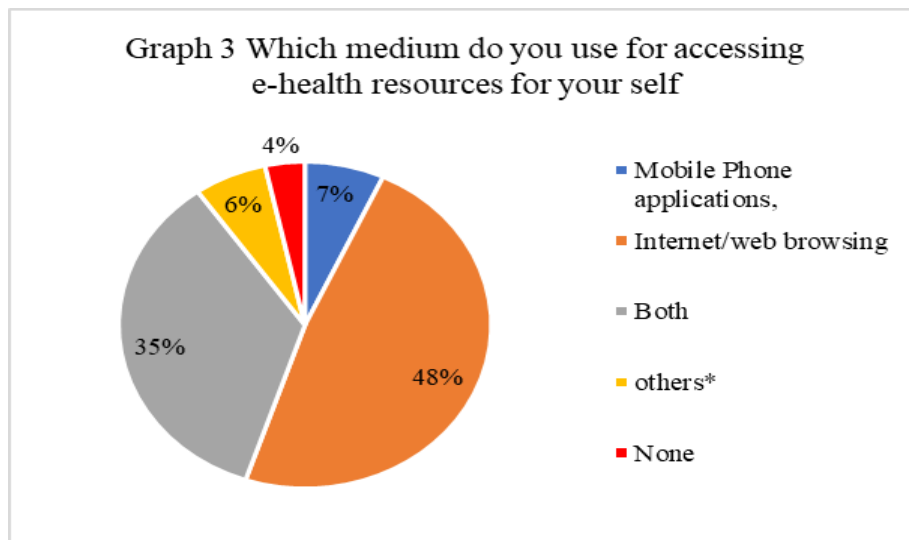
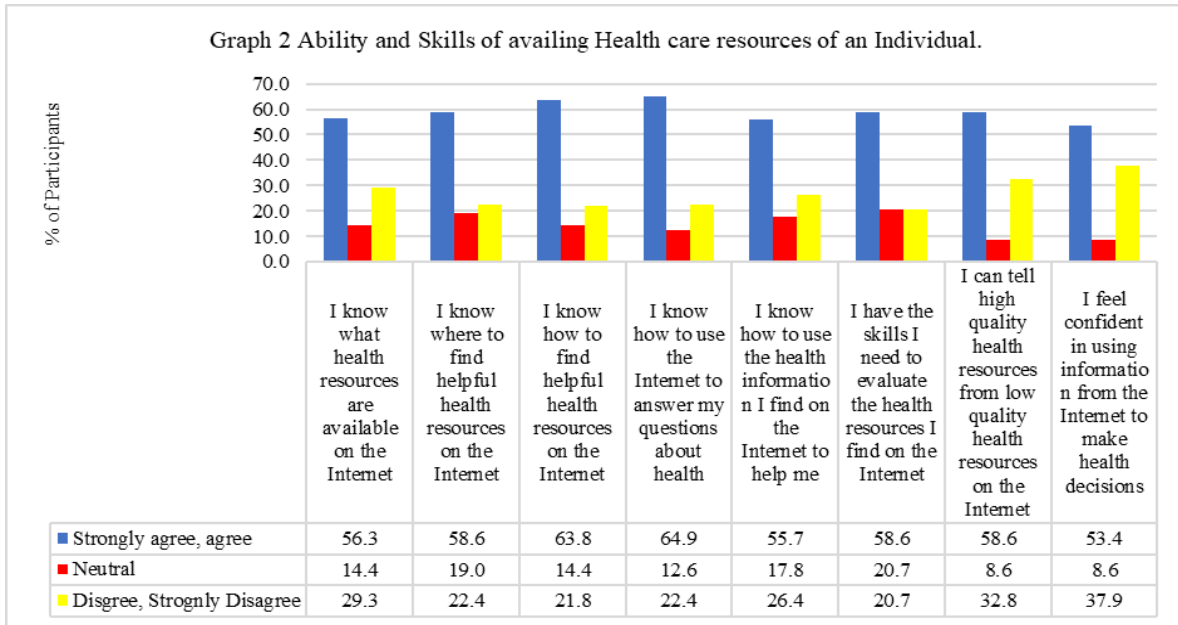
In this cross-section survey, the E-health literacy scale (Eheals) was circulated among all the registered physiotherapist of Gujarat state. 174 physiotherapists working as Academicians, Clinicians, Researchers participated in the study. Out of 174 Participant only 75 participant (43%) were aware about NDHM. The baseline details of participants are shown in Table 1.

Gender	% of Participant
Male	29.3
Female	70.7
Job Profile	% of Participant
Academician	25.9
Clinician	50.0
Academician & research	1.7
Clinician & research	3.4
Research	3.4
All of Above	15.5

**RESULT**

In the present study, the data was analysed using Microsoft excel-Windows 11 version 22H2. A total of 174 registered physiotherapist (123 females, 55 males) participated in the study. The analysis of scoring of Eheals is shown I graph 1 and 2 for usefulness and ability to access health care resources through the internet. The opinions of Physiotherapist about E-health care resources were taken under broadly 3 categories, such as medium used for accessing health information digitally, and ways of using digital devises for their own use and while treating patients in their clinical practice, which are presented in graph 3, 4 and 5 respectively.





## DISCUSSION

Past few years have been drastic changes have been noticed in all the industries including medical and healthcare setups.(8)

Digitalization has affected the human life majorly. The transparency, accuracy and ease to accessibility can become great with use of digitalization but it also depends on

ability and skills on health care providers and seekers. (2,4,9)

Current survey was done to investigate the level of E-health literacy in registered physiotherapist practising in Gujarat. Total 174 physiotherapist across Gujarat state participated in the study. As shown in Graph 1, 90% of physiotherapist believed that the internet is a useful and important tool in making decisions related to healthcare and for accessing health-related information. Regardless of the high percentage regarding the usefulness and importance of the internet, the ability and skills of finding and utilizing health care resources electronically was noted moderate to low as shown in Graph.2. Moreover, only 53% physiotherapist were confident regarding using health care information found on the internet. Approximately 3.4 % Physiotherapist were unsure about using the internet and approximately 5.7 % of physiotherapist expressed their inability or incompetence in using internet for various purposes related to healthcare. The overall result of the Ehealth scale suggests 53 to 65% of physiotherapist have sufficient skills to use the internet or other digital tools for health care services.

As shown in Graph.3 highest number of physiotherapists use the internet/web browsing for accessing healthcare related information, following mobile phone applications and both. As shown in Graph 4 and 5 E-health resources were maximum used for understanding the diagnosed condition of individual or their family member and some others such as Health Portal, Articles from well-known sites, Referred links, social media, Smart watches etc. while practicing in clinical, highest no of physiotherapist found using electronic or digital devices for patient education, prescribing the exercises program, showing videos through devices following patient's data record and documentation. Some physiotherapist reported the use of internet to find out equipment to maintain physical fitness and speedy recovery. Very less percentage of physiotherapist found using

internet or digital device for all the purposes from documentation, assessment, diagnosis and prescribing home exercises program to patients. There is a lack of similar research in this area but this finding are in line with previous researches done in India in various populations. (9,10)

## CONCLUSION

With digital advancement in health care services, E-health literacy will take a significant place in everyone's life. E-health literacy was found moderate to low on Physiotherapist practicing in India. There are countless possibilities of further studies in this area, such as larger population sizes, various urban and rural populations with different components and/or tools of E-health resources.

### *Declaration by Authors*

**Ethical Approval:** N/a

**Acknowledgement:** Participants

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**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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