ABSTRACT

Background- Text Neck Syndrome (TNS) is becoming more common among university students due to prolonged forward head posture during device use. This study focuses on physiotherapy students, who have formal training in musculoskeletal mechanics and ergonomics, to investigate if their professional knowledge leads to improved postural behaviour, a key issue in health education that lacks empirical assessment.

Methods- A cross-sectional comparative study involving 150 participants from Brainware University assessed postural alignment through photographic Craniovertebral Angle (CVA) measurement. Participants were divided into three groups: BPT Year 1 (n=50), BPT Year 4 (n=50), and Non-healthcare students (n=50). Musculoskeletal discomfort was measured using the Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire (NMQ), device posture with the Smartphone Posture Questionnaire (SPQ), daily screen exposure via the Screen Time Assessment Scale (STAS), and postural knowledge through the Postural Knowledge Questionnaire (PKQ). Statistical analyses utilized one-way ANOVA, post-hoc Tukey HSD, independent t-tests, Pearson correlations, and chi-square tests (SPSS Version 26.0; α=0.05).

Results -Group A (BPT Year 1) demonstrated a significantly larger mean CVA (47.87° ± 7.07) compared to both Group B (43.71° ± 6.67) and Group C (43.94° ± 6.86), indicating paradoxically better postural alignment in junior physiotherapy students [$F(2,147) = 5.813$, $p = 0.004$, $\eta^2 = 0.073$]. FHP prevalence was 66.0%, 80.0%, and 78.0% in Groups A, B, and C respectively. No significant between-group differences were found for NMQ discomfort scores, PKQ knowledge scores, SPQ postural habits, or daily screen time. Pearson correlations between PKQ and CVA ($r = -0.017$, $p = 0.834$) and between screen time and NMQ neck scores ($r = -0.106$, $p = 0.196$) were non-significant across the full cohort.

Conclusion - This study indicates that professional physiotherapy education does not provide a postural advantage compared to non-healthcare peers, with final-year students showing CVA values similar to those without formal training. This highlights a notable knowledge-practice gap and suggests a need for reform in physiotherapy curricula and wellness initiatives in health sciences universities in India.

Keywords: *Text Neck Syndrome; Craniovertebral Angle; Forward Head Posture; Physiotherapy Students; Postural Knowledge; Knowledge-Practice Gap; Musculoskeletal Discomfort; Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire*

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