Abstract

Objectives: To measure the attitudes and beliefs of Brazilian physical therapists about chronic low back pain and to identify the sociodemographic characteristics that are more likely to influence these attitudes and beliefs. Methods: We conducted a cross-sectional study with 100 Brazilian physical therapists who routinely work with chronic low back pain patients. The attitudes and beliefs were measured by the Pain Attitudes and Beliefs Scale for Physiotherapists (PABS.PT) and the Health Care Providers’ Pain and Impairment Relationship Scale (HC-PAIRS). Multivariate linear regression models were built to identify sociodemographic characteristics that could be associated with physical therapists attitudes and beliefs. Results: Mean scores on the biomedical and biopsychosocial factors of PABS.PT were 27.06 (SD 7.19) and 24.34 (SD 6.31), respectively, and the mean score on HC-PAIRS was 45.45 (SD 10.45). The score on PABS.PTbiomedical was associated with gender and years of professional experience. No variable was associated with the score on PABS.PTbiopsychosocial. The score on HC-PAIRS was significantly associated with the number of back pain patients seen by the physical therapist each month. These results indicate that male and less experienced physical therapists tend to follow a biomedical approach to the treatment of chronic low back pain patients, and that the lower the professional experience the stronger the belief in the relationship between pain and disability. Conclusions: Brazilian physical therapists are uncertain of the factors involved in the development and maintenance of chronic low back pain and about the relationship between pain and disability in these patients.

Keywords

Chronic low back pain, physical therapy, health knowledge, attitudes, practice.