

Current Knowledge of Scoliosis in Physiotherapy Students Trained in the UK

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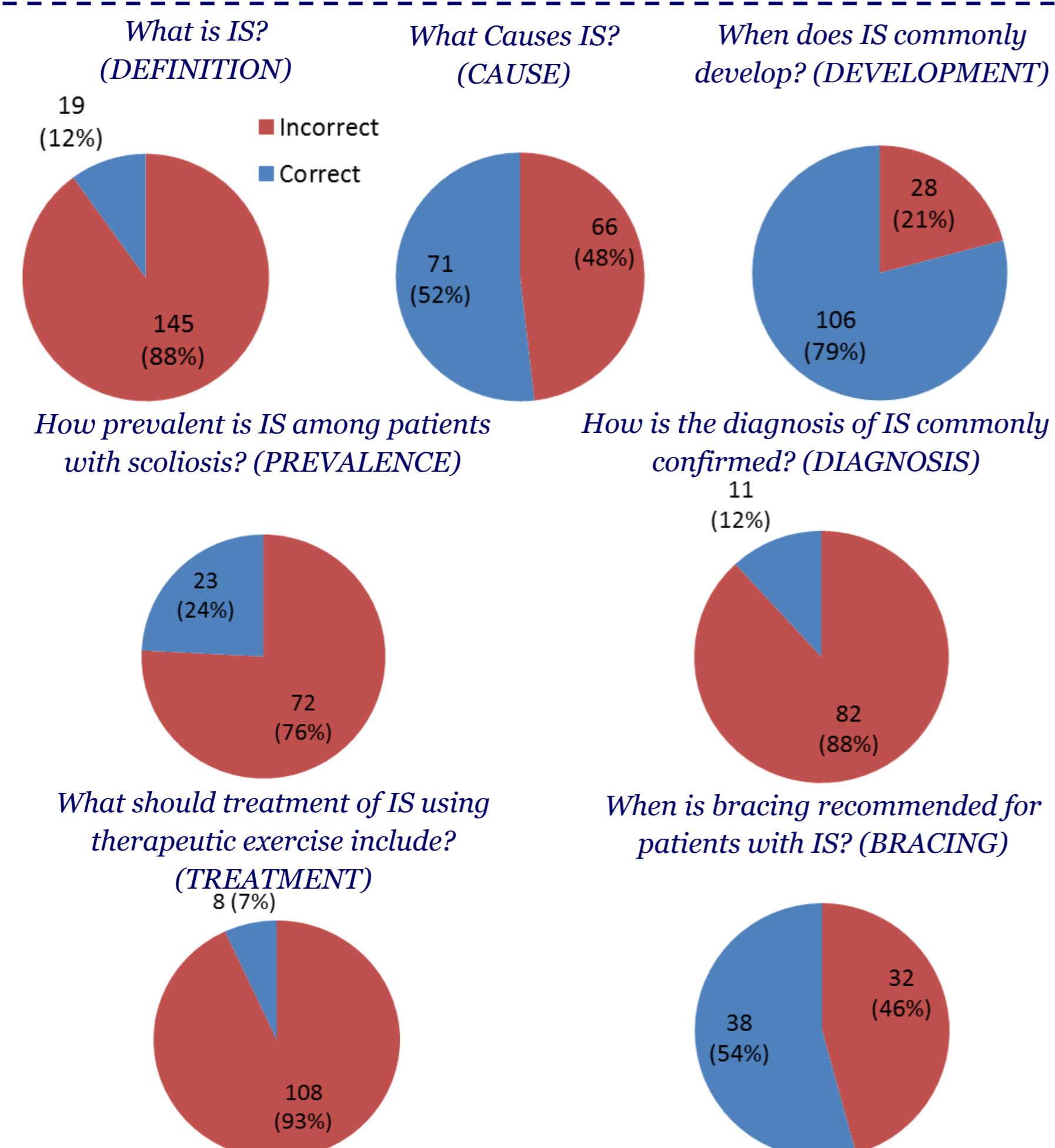
Introduction

- It has been highlighted in both Poland and the United States that knowledge of Idiopathic Scoliosis (IS) among physiotherapy students is limited with respect to the SOSORT Guidelines.
- Early detection and correct initial management of the condition are essential in effective scoliosis care, and thus physiotherapists should be aware of the basic criteria for diagnosis and indications for treatment.
- The aim of this study was to evaluate the basic knowledge of IS in physiotherapy students trained in the UK.



Method

- A previously designed and tested 10-question survey, including knowledge of 2011 SOSORT Guidelines was transcribed onto an online survey platform.
- This was designed to analyse knowledge of: **definition, cause, development, prevalence, diagnosis, treatment and bracing of scoliosis.**
- All UK universities offering physiotherapy degrees were invited to participate and the programme lead of each institution was asked to distribute the questionnaire amongst the target population of penultimate and final year physiotherapy students (Master and Bachelor Degrees). The final number of students who received the study invitation is unknown. The survey link closed after 8 weeks of data collection.



Results

- Sample: 206 students, split over 12 institutions successfully completed the questionnaire.
- Although 79% of students recognised when IS is likely to develop, only 52% recognised that IS' aetiology is unknown.
- 88% of students incorrectly defined IS as a 2-dimensional deformity, with only 24% of students successful in recognising the prevalence of IS within the scoliosis population.
- 12% of students could recognise the criteria for diagnosis, but 93% were unable to identify the appropriate treatment approach through therapeutic exercise. Finally 54% of students managed to correctly identify when bracing is recommended for IS.
- In comparison to previous studies within the US, UK students performed worse in relation to all questions except when asked 'What should treatment of IS using therapeutic exercise include' which 6% of students answered correctly comparing to 3% in the US Study.

Conclusion

With only 7% of students able to answer >50% of the survey questions correctly, there is a clear lack of knowledge of appropriate IS diagnosis and care which could directly impact the information these patients are given within first contact primary care in the UK.

References

Ciazynski D, Czernicki K, Durmala J. Knowledge about idiopathic scoliosis among students of physiotherapy. *Studies in health technology and informatics*. 2008;140:281-285.