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Comprehensive Overview of Parental Experiences and Expectations from Physiotherapy for Children with Down Syndrome

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this review was to provide a comprehensive overview of the parental experiences and expectations associated with physiotherapy interventions for children with Down syndrome (DS). Literatures available till 2024 were included in the review sourced from Scopus, PubMed, and ProQuest databases. The initial search yielded 84 articles, of which 30 duplicates were identified and removed. Following a rigorous screening process, 46 articles were excluded based on relevance and quality criteria, resulting in 7 articles being included in the final review.The findings highlight that DS is one of the most common genetic disorders, characterised by intellectual disability, congenital anomalies, and developmental delays. The findings reveal that DS imposes considerable medical, social, and emotional burdens on families. While physiotherapy is instrumental in improving motor and functional abilities in children with DS, there remains a significant lack of research examining the specific needs and expectations of parents engaging in these interventions. This review identifies key themes, including emotional, social, and physical challenges faced by families, financial constraints, barriers to accessing quality therapy services, and the critical role of multidisciplinary support systems. Despite the recognised importance of family-centred approaches, few studies have explored the intersection of parental perspectives and therapeutic outcomes. Furthermore, gaps were observed in research representing underprivileged regions, particularly low- and middle-income settings.By addressing these limitations, future studies can advance family-centred care models and enhance outcomes for children with DS and their families. This review underscores the urgent need for targeted, qualitative research to bridge these gaps and optimise support for parents navigating physiotherapy interventions.

Keywords: Children with Disability, Physical therapy, Qualitative study