WORLD PHYSIOTHERAPY DAY
8TH SEPTEMBER 2017

NOPANY INSTITUTE OF HEALTHCARE STUDIES CONDUCTS FOOT SURVEY ‘HAPPY FEET’ IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN KOLKATA

Nopany Institute of Healthcare Studies (NIHS) since the beginning of its inception, has been striving very hard to spread the awareness and importance of Physiotherapy and matching steps with the World Confederation of Physical Therapy (WCPT); NIHS adopts the theme of the WCPT every year and conducts program to spread good health and fitness in the society. The campaign message of World Physical Therapy Day 2017 is “Physical activity for life”, showing how physical therapists can help keep people of all ages active. This is an opportunity for physical therapists from all over the world to raise awareness about the crucial contribution of the Physiotherapy profession to keep people well, mobile and independent. Physiotherapists can demonstrate how physical activity and interventions can maximise strength and mobility. Through advice and exercise programs, physical therapists support people of all ages to achieve activity goals.

It has been found that total 5% of the school going children in the age group of 6-10 years have flat foot problem. Research suggests that obese and overweight children are maybe more likely to have flat foot than those with ideal weight. Arches of the feet, function as stable weight bearing support to the body during standing and act as efficient levers to propel the body weight forward during walking. Children with flat feet or other feet impairments may develop foot pain and find it slightly difficult to undertake various activities like running and jumping.

So this year Nopany Institute of Healthcare Studies decided to conduct a feet survey of primary school children in the capital city of West Bengal, Kolkata. As far as we are aware no such survey has been conducted in India and this will be the first of its kind. When school authorities of different schools were approached, they were extremely excited about this kind of a survey as they felt that there was a need for it but had never thought it could be done in this manner. The survey was named ‘Happy Feet’ and posters with smiling animated feet are placed in standees so that the children did not
feel intimidated. The plan was to screen the primary section (age 6-10 years) of each school.

The first ‘Happy Feet’ survey was conducted on 8\textsuperscript{th} September in an extremely reputed private school of Kolkata. 350 children were assessed for their current foot size, foot posture, biomechanics and any foot deformities (calcaneal valgus and varus, hallux valgus and pronated and supinated feet, flat feet). The recommended shoe size was also noted to compare whether the children were wearing the correct shoe size. It was decided that the findings would be conveyed to the school authorities who would then convey the same to the parents. This was due to the privacy issues of the child in school. A generic exercise handout will also be provided to children with feet issues to stretch and strengthen relevant lower limb muscle/s.

The assessment was conducted in numbered stations where each child had to visit all stations for Registration, Body weight and Height measurement, provide information on previous or present injury to the foot, Assessment of foot posture, skin and nail assessment, and foot size measurement using BRANNOCK device.
All the stations were managed by trained student volunteers and supervised by Senior Physiotherapists. From the time a child entered the registration section at Station 1, to the exit station 7, it took around 2 minutes which was fairly efficient in terms of time. Children were fairly excited at the prospect of having their feet examined. After attending the camp they could be seen looking at each other’s feet and examining how they walked and stood.
This survey will serve two purpose: (1) Awareness about feet problems which are often neglected due to several reasons (2) Early intervention at an early age which may help in the prevention of future complications.

The long term plan is to survey 3000 urban school children, which we intend to continue and complete by 8th September 2018.

Healthy and Happy feet are important for Physical Activity and NIHS aims to spread awareness about the importance of feet care, posture and correct footwear in children and thus make Physical Activity an enjoyable and happy experience.

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