



## **A Comparison of Male and Female Physiotherapy Students' Perception from Problem Based Learning in Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy**

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### **Abstract**

The most commonly used teaching in schools, universities and institutes in Sri Lanka is the traditional or conventional lecture method. Problem based learning (PBL) introduced by the McMaster Medical School in the mid-1960s, has become a popular teaching learning method and is used in many educational programs of health care professionals such as in medical, dentistry, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, and Allied health curricula all over the world. The most commonly used teaching method in the Department of Physiotherapy, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences is the conventional lecture. Few studies have assessed the perception of PBL to musculoskeletal physiotherapy education, and even fewer have examined whether women and men evaluate PBL differently. Thus this study was undertaken to compare perceptions of the male and female students in relation to learning musculoskeletal physiotherapy.

The study population comprised of third year physiotherapy students of the Department of Physiotherapy, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. Teaching of selected musculoskeletal conditions related to upper and lower limb was carried out in four PBL sessions. A 15 item, self-administered questionnaire with a 5 point Likert scale was used to assess students' perception on PBL. 24 females and 8 males responded (comprising 75% of the total cohort). Majority of both male (83%) and female (83%) students agreed that it promotes critical thinking. However, men expressed rather more (83%) trust in fulfilling learning objectives and confirmed greater enjoyment. Most of women (66%) felt that it has helped them to learn more when working in a group. Both genders equally perceived time-consuming as the main disadvantage. The gender differences were not substantial. Thus it can be concluded that third year physiotherapy students' in both genders have a positive attitude towards PBL as a teaching learning strategy.