

# SURVEY ON EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE AMONG ITALIAN PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

Gianola S<sup>1</sup>, Castellini G<sup>1,2</sup>, Negri R<sup>3,4</sup>, Corbetta<sup>3,4</sup>

1. IRCCS Istituto Ortopedico Galeazzi, Unit of Clinical Epidemiology,, Milan, Italy

2. University of Milan, Department of Biomedical Sciences for Health, Milan, Italy

3. IRCCS San Raffaele Hospital, Rehabilitation and Functional Recovery Department, Milan, Italy

4. Vita-Salute San Raffaele University, Physiotherapy Degree Course, Milan, Italy

## Background and Objective

The Evidence Based Medicine EBM integrates the best available evidence, clinical expertise and patient's preferences in decision making in patient care (1). It provides a theoretical framework for the everyday clinical practice, which takes the name of evidence-based practice (EBP), figure 1. Despite the desirable growing and high diffusion of EBP, the effort of research in assessing the knowledge and behaviours of physiotherapists toward the use of evidence in their clinical practice is low (2-3). We aimed to describe beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours toward EBP among Italian physiotherapists members of the "Associazione Italiana Fisioterapisti" (AIFI) and to generate hypotheses about the relationship between these attributes and respondent's characteristics.

## Methods

We made a cross sectional web-survey among physiotherapists members of AIFI through the Survey Monkey platform. The main outcome measures were the knowledge, and behaviours regarding EBP. We collected demographic and related information. We used logistic regression analyses to examine relationships among variables.

## Results

A total of 1289 physiotherapist participated to the survey with a response rate of 64.5%. More than 85% of respondents perceived to be familiar with EBP, 75% to be able to use online databases for retrieve relevant papers and 60% to be able to understand reported statistical analyses. However, in the real knowledge, a consistent part of respondents believe that patient's desire and clinical expertise are not included in the EBM model (56% and 39%, respectively). It's seems that spending more time in patient care, research and teaching slightly influence the knowledge of EBP model (patient desire and clinical experience) whereas the education level strongly influence the knowledge of EBP (Graduate degree  $p < 0.001$ , Master I level  $p < 0.001$ , Doctor of Philosophy  $p < 0.05$ ). Half of respondents declared to understand and could explain the term "meta-analysis" but only 17% know the term "forest plot" and 20% correctly judged the finding of a given meta-analysis. The lack of time was identified as the primary barrier in EBP implementation.

## Conclusion

The survey provides evidence of a gap between perceived and real knowledge of EBP among Italian physiotherapists. However, they showed a positive attitude towards EBP and educational interventions to raise the awareness' level on EBP are justified, especially if targeted to older physiotherapists.

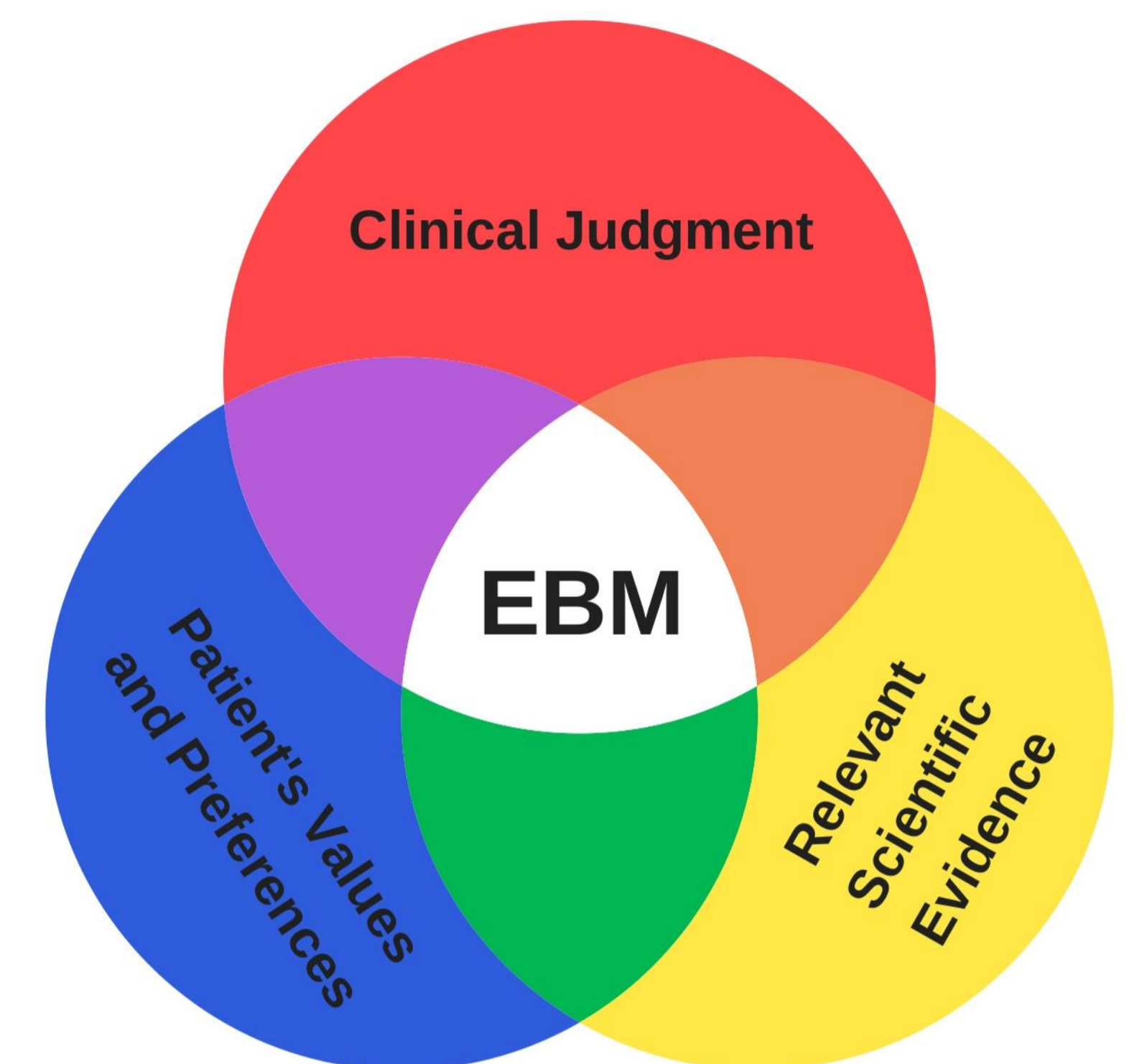
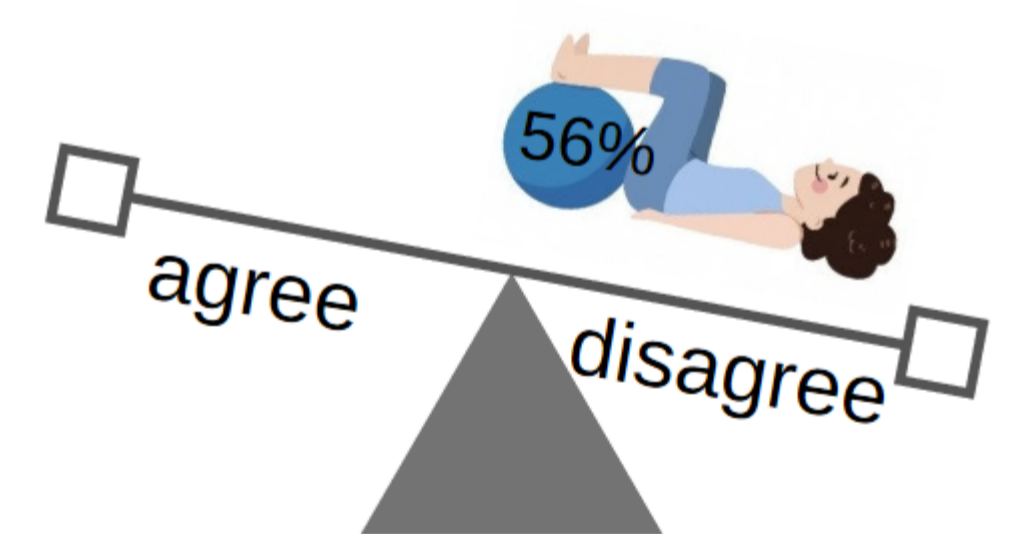


Figure 1. EBM model.

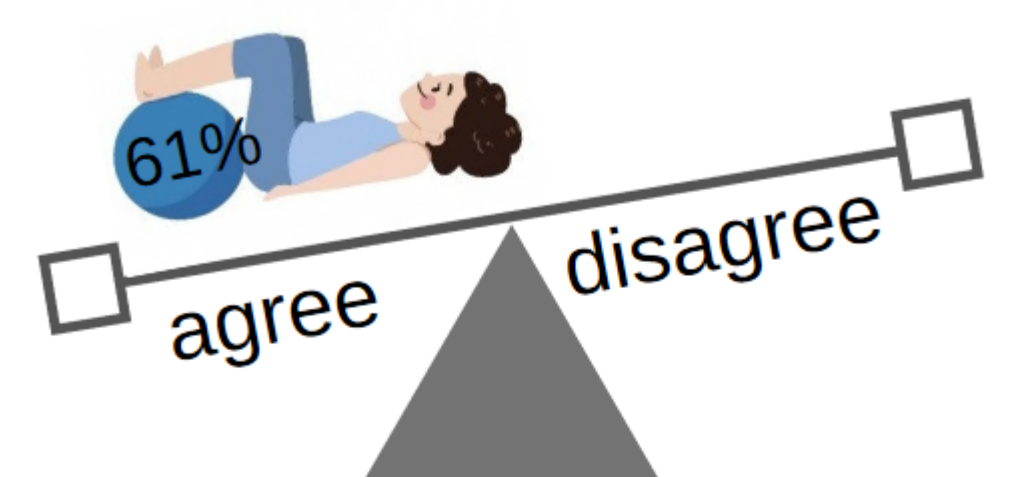


Figure 2. Sample characteristics.

In your opinion, the preferences of patients are included in the EBM model?(item 18)



In your opinion, the clinical experience is included in the EBM model? (item 19)



In your opinion, the scientific literature is useful in your clinical practice? (item 20)

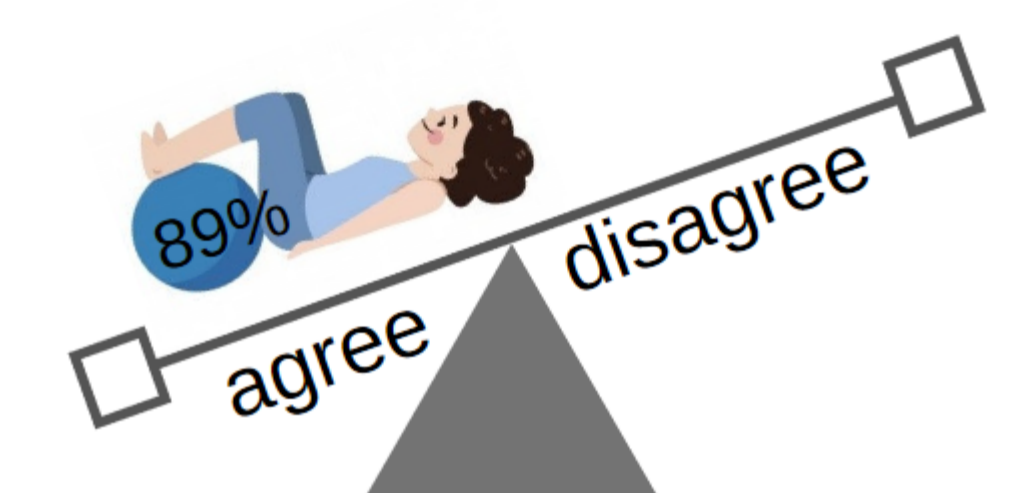


Figure 3. Perceived knowledge of EBP basic principles of patients' desire (item 18), clinical expertise (item 19) and scientific literature (item 20).