

# Availability, Usage and Factors Affecting Usage of Electrophysical Agents (EPA) by Physical Therapists

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** WCPT defined EPAs - “use of electrophysical and biophysical energies for evaluation, treatment and prevention of impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions”. This study would aid in the information input about current modalities in the clinical field. Choosing the right EPA is not a simple clinical decision. This study would provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting the decision to use an EPA.

**Methodology:** 65 Physiotherapists- minimum 1yr of experience and using EPAs in their practice participated in the study. A self-made, face validated questionnaire was used. After institutional ethical committee approval, the therapists filled the questionnaire with their consent. The responses were statistically analysed.

**Results:** The most frequently available- TENS (98%), Ultrasound (98%) and IFT (97%). The least available- Microwave therapy (17%), Magnetotherapy (9%), Whirlpool bath (3%) and TECAR Therapy (2%). The most commonly used EPAs (>80%) - Hot packs, ultrasound, IFT, cold packs and TENS, orderly. 16 factors affecting usage of EPAs were analysed. Availability of the equipment ranked the highest followed by indications & contraindications, safety, condition to be treated and research evidence. The patient preference, instructions by physician, cost & patient caseload were least influential.

**Conclusion:** EPA is still readily available in most hospitals, although it appears to be confined to acute, subacute and chronic hospitals. However, availability for some modalities may have decreased compared to 20 years ago. Usage was not restricted to just one category, with thermotherapy, electrotherapy, and traction being widely used.

**Keywords:** Electro physical agents, Usage, Physiotherapists

