

The Knowledge and Use of Blood Flow Restriction Therapy in Physical Therapy Centers

Noa Mills '21, Mariah Elder '21, Molly Boyce '21, and Matteo Evdokas '21

Advisor: Dr. Stephen Ives

Abstract

Introduction: Blood Flow Restriction Therapy (BFRT) is a rehabilitation technique that seems to elicit hypertrophy gains similar to heavy weightlifting. Despite increased popularity of BFRT, the extent it is used in physical therapy (PT) is unknown. **Purpose:** The purpose of the study was to examine the utilization of BFRT in PT clinics and assess the reasons why or why not BFRT is used, and if there are limitations or significant safety concerns. **Hypothesis:** It was hypothesized that BFRT is not commonly used in PT centers due to lack of knowledge about the efficacy and safety of BFRT. **Methods:** PTs were recruited to participate via emailing or calling to take an online survey on their knowledge and use of BFRT. **Results:** From 159 participants, it was found that 88.1%(n=140) of participating PTs have heard of BFRT while only 38.6%(n=54) have used BFRT on a patient. There was a significant difference between male and female PTs on knowledge (98% vs 81%, $p < 0.001$) and use (48% vs 24%, $p = 0.016$) of BFRT. A trend was seen in age groups for knowledge and use of BFRT, with younger clinicians more aware of and using BFRT. **Discussion:** Most clinicians who heard of BFRT would like to practice it, and of those who have not heard of it, many would like to learn more. Increasing education can help assuage fears of potential side effects. Nearly all BFRT practitioners believed it was efficacious and will continue using it.