# Overview:

This research project investigated the extent to which physiotherapy and diet aids the effects suffered with arthritis.

The research was divided into three sections. Stage one researched the way in which diet should be adjusted for an individual suffering arthritis. Secondly, the various forms of physiotherapy were explored and finally, a conclusion was drawn showing to what extent both of these components aided the effects of arthritis.

A diverse range of research processes where used, including:

* Analysis of books
* Analysis of internet sites
* Correspondence via emails
* Communication via telephone
* Conducting interviews
* Conducting surveys

I found that the most reliable and valuable process was that of internet research as it was both valid and provided information on all aspects of my question. The outcome was presented in a written report, with the purpose of displaying the many key findings in a clear, concise way. It was found that alteration in diet and physiotherapy reduces the effects, but is not able to cure arthritis.

(Words: 151)

***Evaluation of the research processes:***

Knowledge and skills were combined with various research processes to discover key findings relating to the research project and eventually substantiate information to develop the research project outcome.

The internet was a major secondary source with plentiful and highly useful information. Due to the factual nature of the question, many credential sites were available, ensuring accurate information was obtained. The “Arthritis Foundation” website was a key source as it contained a large amount of relevant information regarding the various aspects of physio as well as dealing with the way that they caused the body to react hence reducing pain and sometimes swelling. Due to the known unreliability of the internet, however, it was ensured that all internet information synthesised to develop the outcome, was confirmed through various additional methods. This aided to eliminate bias and hence increased the credibility of the data obtained. The internet was also essential in the preliminary aspects of the primary research. Through use of the SPORTS.MED SA website, many practising physiotherapists were discovered and their contact details recorded for interviews.

A key secondary source utilised through the research process was the South Australian State Library. As this is a large library, valuable information could be gained regarding the research question both from books, and also from their online database. This was an important source as it was highly reputable and accurate, in addition to conveying updated information. Expertise guidance at this library also enabled useful and relevant books to be selected from the wide range available. Reputable book sources were extremely useful as they provided information and helped to validate key findings discovered via the internet.

Primary sources were a major research process utilised in the development of the research project. Interviews helped to authenticate key findings discovered in the secondary research and clarify conclusions and responses from the surveys performed. Physiotherapist, Dr Shylie Davidson, was a valuable primary source as she is a practising physiotherapist and has had a lot of experience dealing with patients with arthritis. Therefore, through correspondence with Shylie it was discovered what the most successful techniques for dealing with arthritis were. Further communications with Shylie through a meeting also helped develop the open up new pathways of research which greatly aided with forming a reliable answer to the question. Other invaluable interviews were with patients personally suffering from arthritis. From this I was able to gain firsthand information and also able to deduce not only the processes that were scientifically proven to work, but also ways that individuals found helped them. However it was necessary to be aware that there was a high chance the interviewee’s would be biased based on past experiences that they may have had. Nevertheless, overall arthritis patients proved to be a valuable interviewee’s by reinforcing information gained, hence ensuring its validity.

Surveys were also performed in order to discover an understanding on how individuals personally dealt with arthritis. The surveys provided the information that that showed most individuals seek pain relief in the same ways; this verified the data that was gathered from other sources. A small sample size of 50 was gained over a large range of ages. The sample size was also very small, however this was not as much of an issue as the purpose of the survey was to reinforce previous findings and the survey results were only used in accordance with other validated conclusions. Personally handing out the surveys had an outstanding advantage, as it allowed the surveyors to be personally questioned to maximise the findings discovered regarding the ways that diet had been adjusted to aid the symptoms of arthritis. To help ensure accuracy was maintained, issues regarding the sample size and possible bias of the surveys were carefully identified and all information gained was compared with key findings from reputable sources.

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the process of surveys by ensuring privacy policies were followed and all surveyors remained anonymous. Surveyors were also given the option to take part in the survey and have their answers anonymously displayed, and interviewees were asked for permission to use their information in the research project.

***Responses to challenges and opportunities:***

As a result of my topic being a highly personal to individuals, I had challenges that I had to overcome throughout the process of conducting surveys. Initially I had to take the ethical boundaries into consideration, and to ensure that all of my survey recipients accepted that the information they provided would be used anonymously in a public document. In addition, initially when I handed out my survey I did not get back very many survey result and therefore I was unable to gain information. I therefore decided to personally hand out the surveys to individuals. This resulted in being an excellent way to gain information as the survey recipients were able to ask questions and I was often able to gain additional information. This was beneficial to my question as I opened many new pathways that I could follow, which led to additional information that could be used to resolve the original question posed.

Another complication that I encountered when conducting my surveys is that due to the fact I was interviewing individuals of the older generation, I had to assist many of them with their survey. To overcome this complication I conducted over the phone surveys which meant that I could phrase the questions in a manner specific to the individual. In this was I was also able to gain invaluable information.

Another challenge that I encountered was that of bias and validity in my secondary research. In a large amount of my sources there was a large degree of bias, and therefore I had to be aware of this when obtaining information. I found that to overcome this challenge I was able to cross reference my information. By ensuring that the information gathered was backed up by other sources the validity was increased, making the information reliable. In addition by securing a wide range of sources the information gained was more valid. I found that studies conducted by medical researched proved to be accurate, factual and unbiased. Hence I was able to validate my research. On the other hand, interviews with practising physiotherapists, and patients with arthritis were an excellent way to gain first hand, valid information. Due to the fact that these individuals are dealing with my research topic on a daily basis, they were able to give me information that aided in validation the internet research I had previously conducted.

***Evaluation of the outcome:***

Through the course of the outcome, knowledge was developed regarding the appropriate way to research, record and substantiate key findings in a succinct, clear and coherent form. Time management was essential in the completion of the project and throughout the process; I developed a deep understanding of the importance of time management and some of the many methods such as time plans that can be implemented to ensure organisation was upheld.

The findings discovered in the outcome have had a great effect on me personally. My awareness regarding the positive effects that physio and diet can have on arthritis has dramatically increased. This has been exceedingly beneficial to me personally as arthritis is a common disease both in my family and in the Australian society, and I now know the various precautions that can be taken to lessen the symptoms and reduce the amount to pain suffered. Further to that it has aided the direction of my education and given focus to my future studies as I now feel passionate about finding ways to ease the pain for arthritis suffered. Therefore my research had helped me personally develop and greatly increase in knowledge.

Through the development of the research project outcome, I have also come to see how the appropriate consumption of nutrients will keep the body healthy and properly functioning. This has helped me to grasp a deeper knowledge and it has heightened my awareness of the debilitating disease and encouraged me to work towards developing methods to aid sufferers. In addition this research project also heightened my awareness for the increased need of medical research.

However on the other hand my research outcome will not be used to great effect in society as it was conducted over a short, six month period and therefore is not an extensive study. I realise the limitations due to the brevity of its duration and the lack of in depth research. Also due to the small sample size of only 50 individuals, the outcome is greatly limited. For this process to be largely successful, it would need to be conducted on a much larger scale. In addition I realise I do not have the appropriate qualifications in the health industry to conduct a thorough medical appraisal that could be used a valid resource for the medical industry.

Thus I believe that the most value of this outcome was to myself; my learning, growth and understanding throughout the course of this project. In addition I believe that whist challenges did present themselves I managed to overcome them and find both valid and reliable data, and was able to accurately answer my question.

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