Scholastic Orthopaedics

Editorial

Volume 2 Issue 1 January 2026

Robotic Physiotherapy in India: From Exotic to Essential for Contemporary Rehabilitation

Dr Mugdha Oberoi

PhD, MPTh (Neurosciences), PGDEMA, Associate Professor & HOD Electrotherapy & Electrodiagnosis, K J Somaiya College of Physiotherapy.

Corresponding Author: Dr Mugdha Oberoi, PhD, MPTh (Neurosciences), PGDEMA, Associate Professor & HOD Electrotherapy & Electrodiagnosis, K J Somaiya College of Physiotherapy.

Received: November 13, 2025; **Published:** December 06, 2025

Abstract

Domestic breakthroughs in robotic physiotherapy are radically transforming India's rehabilitation scene. Robotic-assisted rehabilitation, which was once thought of as an expensive and futuristic luxury, is becoming a therapeutic need to address the increasing demands of musculoskeletal and neurological recovery. The Indian situation is highlighted in this editorial, which focuses on clinical relevance, technological advancement, accessibility issues, and the future of robotic physiotherapy as a viable and essential part of contemporary rehabilitation practice.

Introduction

Rehabilitation in India has two challenges: a high disability burden and a lack of access to expert care. With the rising prevalence of stroke, spinal cord injuries, and post-operative orthopedic disorders, physiotherapists are under increasing pressure to provide rigorous, repetitive, and accurately measured therapy sessions. Conventional physiotherapy, while helpful, is limited by therapist availability, exhaustion, and subjective judgment.

In this context, robotic physiotherapy has emerged as a possible alternative to traditional approaches. It provides high-intensity, consistent, and data-driven therapies that can speed up healing and increase patient participation. While the global acceptance of robotic rehabilitation is widely documented, India's experience exemplifies a unique blend of innovation, cost, and accessibility.

The Indian context: Emerging Innovation and Clinical Impact.

Over the last decade, India has made significant advances in the design and development of indigenous robotic rehabilitation systems. Many make in India systems, created through collaborations between physiotherapists and engineers, demonstrate how locally made robotic technologies may be both cost-effective and clinically relevant.

These systems have shown effectiveness in post-stroke rehabilitation, spinal cord injury treatment, sports and orthopedic recovery, offering precise movement assistance and real-time feedback for motor learning. Importantly, their affordability—significantly lower than imported alternatives—makes them suitable for use in tertiary care hospitals, educational institutions, and specialist rehabilitation centres.

As someone who worked closely on the development and clinical validation of these systems, I've seen a rising acceptance among clinicians and patients alike.

The capacity of these technologies to provide repetitive, measurable, and fatigue-free therapy sessions improves both therapeutic outcomes and therapist productivity.

Challenges of Clinical Integration

Despite its promise, robotic physiotherapy in India faces significant challenges to wider implementation. The cost of equipment, a lack of standardized training, and a lack of insurance coverage remain significant constraints. Furthermore, physiotherapy school in India continues to lack formal exposure to robots, assistive technology, biomechanics, and data analytics skills that will be critical for the future generation of Therapists.

To progress forward, India needs deliberate policy interventions, interdisciplinary research funding, and curricular modernization. Collaborations between engineering schools, physiotherapy colleges, and tertiary hospitals can help bridge the gap between innovation and implementation.

The Road Ahead

The shift of robotic physiotherapy from luxury to need in India would be based on three pillars:

Accessibility Through Indigenous Development: Continued investment in locally built robotic systems to lower costs and expand service coverage.

Evidence-Based Integration: Conducting large-scale, multicentre clinical trials to determine therapy efficacy and cost-effectiveness.

Education and capacity-building: Incorporating modules on rehabilitation robotics and artificial intelligence into physiotherapy education and professional training programs.

Robotics, when paired with human empathy and professional competence, has the potential to transform the rehabilitation process, making it more efficient, engaging, and outcome-oriented.

Conclusion

Robotic physiotherapy in India is no longer an experimental notion; it is a clinical reality that is fast evolving because of indigenous innovation and academic collaboration. The development of Make in India systems and state-of-the-art rehabilitation Centres shows that India can be a leader in cost-effective, patient-centred rehabilitation technology.

The future of Indian rehabilitation depends on how well we integrate this technology into regular clinical practice. It is time for the physiotherapy community to embrace robots as a requirement rather than a luxury in modern, evidence-based rehabilitation.