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Exploring the Perceptions of Occupational Therapy Among Physical Therapists

Ryan York OTS

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Carly Fennell OTS

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Laura Lawson OTS

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Madison Rudolph OTS

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Erin Melhorn OTR/L

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

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Motivation

- Often, the field of occupational therapy is misunderstood ¹
- One of the main focuses of OT is to foster participation and engagement in ADLs, as well as other occupations
- Occupational therapists (OTs) and physical therapy practitioners (PTPs) often work together so it is important that PTPs have an understanding of our practice
- An understanding of the occupational therapy field is important for referrals, as well as for the wellbeing of the patient

Methods & Materials

- 322 surveys sent, 65 surveys completed
 - 59 of the responses met inclusion criteria
- Survey design
 - Multiple choice
 - Open-ended
 - Likert scale
 - Select all that apply
- Data was collected by QuestionPro and statistical analyses were run using SPSS

6. In your own words, define occupational therapy and the role of an occupational therapist. (2-3 sentences)

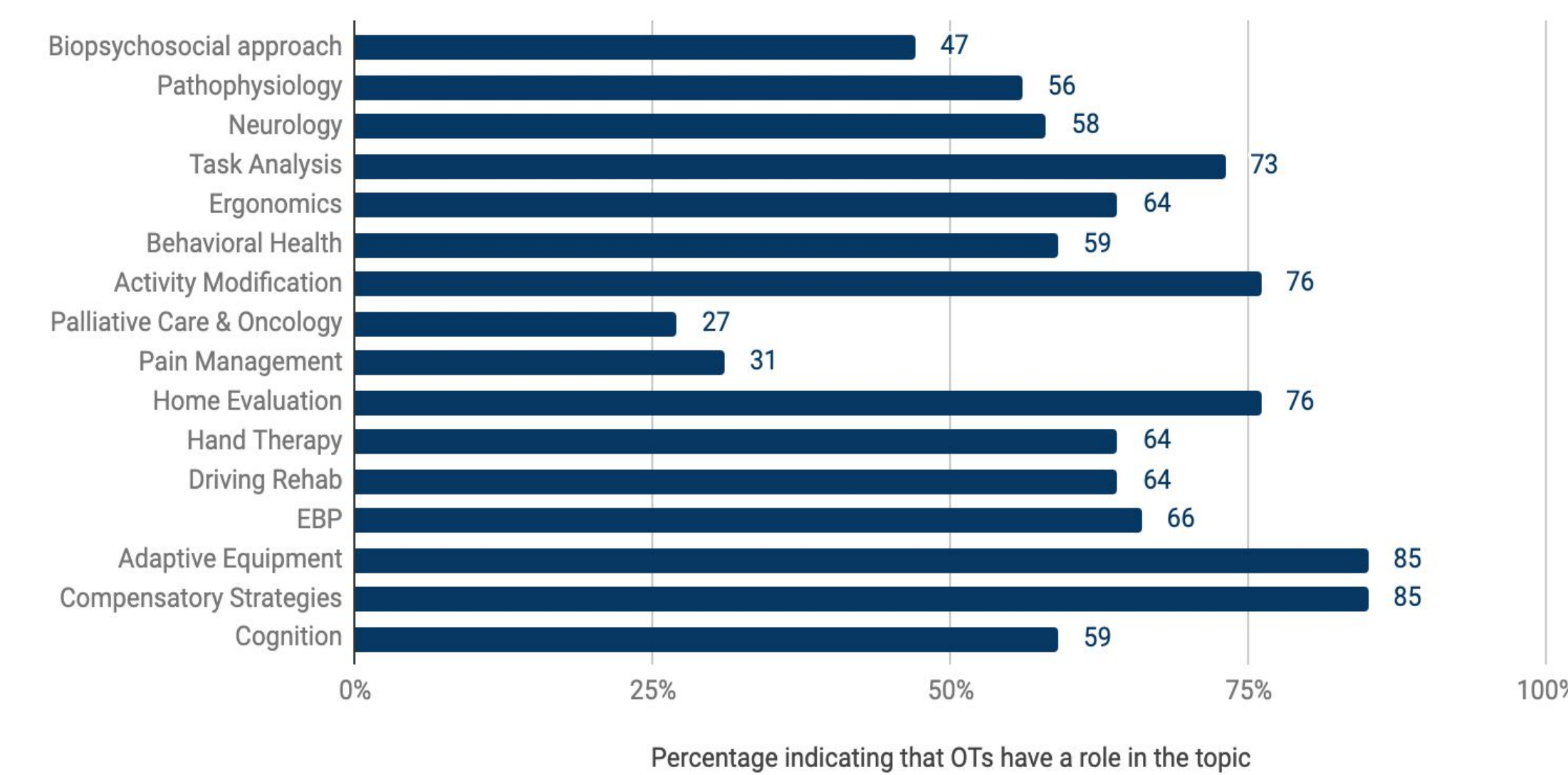
Select the answer in which most strongly reflects your belief about the occupational therapy field.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. Occupational therapists are important members of the healthcare team.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I understand the role that occupational therapists have as a part of the healthcare team.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I understand the role that occupational therapists have in improving the client health outcomes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. It is a good idea to collaborate with occupational therapists when co-treating a client.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Occupational therapists are trained in the biopsychosocial approach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Occupational therapists are trained in pathophysiology.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Occupational therapists are trained in neurology.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Occupational therapists are trained in task analysis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Occupational therapists are trained in ergonomics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Results cont.

- Open-ended question resulted in a mean score of 2.12 indicating understanding of key terms but still lacking in recognition of entire scope of OT.
- Likert Scale results* were as follows:
 - 95% believe OTs are important members of the healthcare team
 - 88% believe it is a good idea to collaborate with OTs when co-treating
 - 61% understood when it would be appropriate to refer a client to OT
 - 44% believe OTs aid in decreasing utilization of healthcare services
 - 42% were confident in explaining the roles of OTs to others
 - Certain practice areas were lesser known such as palliative care/ oncology, pain management, and use of biopsychosocial approach.

*These results were calculated based on percentage of participants strongly agreeing with each statement



- Select-all-that-apply results are as follows:
 - Most practice settings had over 85% of participants selecting them, except for psychiatric hospitals (83.1%), client workplaces (71.2%), and community centers (67.8%)
 - The populations less well-known include neonates (78.0%), individuals with mental health conditions (81.4%), prisoners (79.7%), and pregnant women (69.5%)
 - Only 83.1% believe cognitive assessments are within occupational therapist's scope of practice
- Independent t-tests show no significant difference between level of knowledge of OT and demographics
 - Negative correlations between setting & importance of collaborating with OTs/knowledge of OT roles
 - Outpatient and home health PTs less likely to agree
 - Positive correlation between knowledge of appropriate referral and frequency working with OTs
 - Positive correlation between confidence in explaining OT roles and frequency working with OTs
 - Negative correlation* between perceived confidence explaining OT and open-ended responses indicating a false confidence in the understanding of the definition of OT.

Discussion

- Overall, PTPs have a good idea of occupational therapy but lack an understanding of some areas in which OTs are qualified.
- 95% of PTPs feel that OTs are important members of the healthcare team, but nearly 40% of PTPs do not feel strongly about their ability to know when to refer clients to occupational therapy services.

Conclusion

- Continued lack of full understanding of the role of occupational therapists
- Importance of interdisciplinary teams
- Physical therapy practitioners have a greater understanding of occupational therapy than hypothesized
- Future research
- Chance to advocate in our own state

References

- 1 Dahl-Popolizio, S., Manson, L., Muir, S., & Rogers, O. (2016). Enhancing the value of integrated primary care: The role of occupational therapy. *Families, Systems & Health: The Journal of Collaborative Family HealthCare*, 34(3), 270–280. doi:10.1037/fsh0000208
- 2 Rose, M. A., Smith, K., Veloski, J.J., Lyons, K.J., Umland, E., & Arenson, C.A. (2009). Attitudes of students in medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, and physical therapy toward interprofessional education. *Journal of Allied Health*, 38(4), 196–200. Retrieved from <https://proxy.lib.utc.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ccm&AN=105273214&site=ehost-live>

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Questions

- Does health profession, setting, years of practice, and frequency working with OTs impact knowledge of occupational therapy?
- Are PTPs able to correctly define the role of occupational therapy in an open-ended question?
- What level of understanding do PTPs have regarding OT's role as important members of the healthcare team and in improving client outcomes?
- What is the current belief held by PTPs regarding collaborating with and referring clients to occupational therapy?

Hypothesis

- PTPs could benefit from further education regarding the roles, responsibilities, and practice areas of OTs.
- PTPs' experience and their frequency of contact with an OT is positively correlated to improved knowledge.
- PTPs will have greater knowledge regarding the roles of OT within their practice setting than they will have regarding OTs' roles in other practice settings.

Results

- Received responses from 65 participants; 59 met inclusion criteria and their demographics are as follows:
 - Responses from 18 states (54% from TN)
 - 79.66% are PTs, 20.34% are PTAs
 - Over 55% work within outpatient settings
 - Over 40% have worked for 20+ years
 - Over 40% work with OTs daily

