

Exploring the Perceptions of Occupational Therapy Among Physical Therapists

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Motivation

- Often, the field of occupational therapy is misunderstood
(Dahl-Popolizio, Manson, Muir, & Rogers, 2016)
- 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

Research 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?

Research Questions (cont.)

- 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?

Hypotheses

- PTPs could benefit from further education regarding the roles, responsibilities, and practice areas of occupational therapists.
- PTPs' experience and their frequency of contact with an occupational therapy practitioner is positively correlated to improved knowledge.

Hypotheses (cont.)

- PTPs will have greater knowledge regarding the roles of occupational therapy practitioners within their practice setting than they will have regarding occupational therapists' roles in other practice settings.

Methods

- Framework
 - Theory of Knowledge
 - Previous studies
- Survey design using QuestionPro
- Participants recruited through:
 - Personal contact
 - APTA database

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.

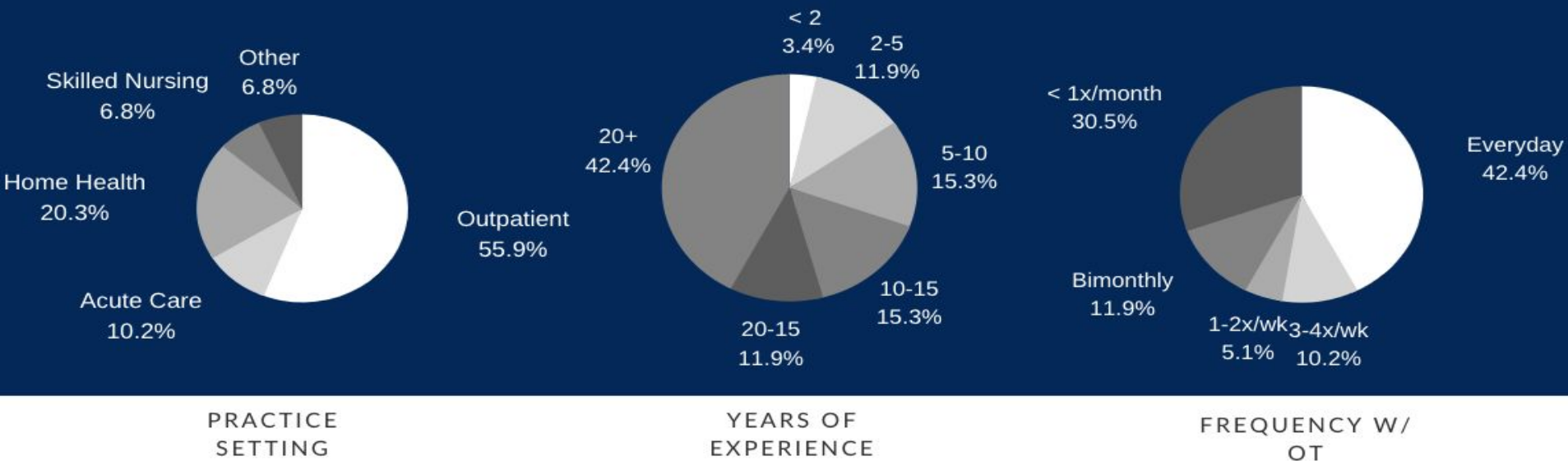
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. Occupational therapists are important members of the healthcare team.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I understand the role that occupational 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"/>

Methods (cont.)

- 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

Results: Demographics

- Received responses from 18 states (54% from TN)
- Of all participants, 79.66% were PTs



Results: Open-Ended Question

- Scored on a scale of 1-3
 - The mean score was 2.12 indicating understanding of key terms but still lacking in recognizing the entire scope of OT practice
- Common terms included “occupational”, “ADLs”, “functional,” “activities,” “work,” and “skills”

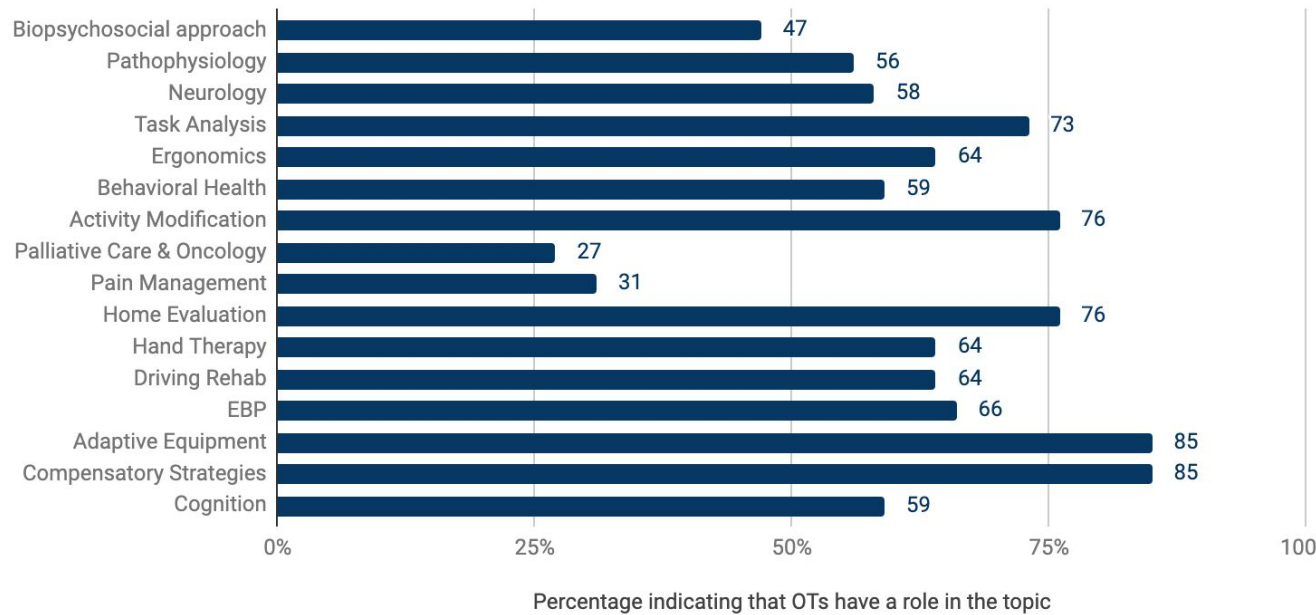


Results: Likert Scale Questions

- 95% believe OTs are important members of the healthcare team
- 81% understand the role that OTs have as a part of the healthcare team
- 84% understand the role OTs have in improving the client health outcomes
- 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

Results: Likert Scale Questions (cont.)

However, certain practice areas were lesser known such as palliative care/ oncology, pain management, and use of biopsychosocial approach.



Results: Select-All-That-Apply Questions

- 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%)
- Of the roles and responsibilities listed, the only significant finding was that only 83.1% believe cognitive assessments are within occupational therapist's scope of practice

Results in Relation to Hypotheses

- Independent t-tests show no significant difference between level of knowledge of OT and demographics
- Negative correlations seen between practice setting and importance of collaborating with OTs/knowledge of OT roles
 - Outpatient and home health PTPs were less likely to agree
 - Need larger sample size for further correlations on demographics to be drawn

Results in Relation to Hypotheses (cont.)

- 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.

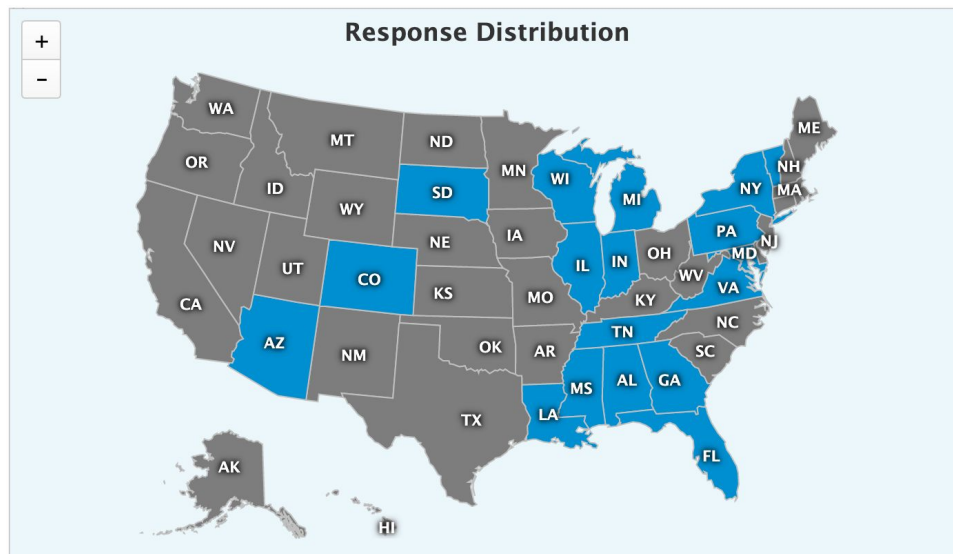
*this correlation was not statistically significant but does show a potential trend that requires further research

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.

Limitations

- Selection sample
 - Size
 - Recruitment
 - Biases
- Open-ended question



Future Implications

- Blind the participants as to the profession of the individuals analyzing the statistics and incorporate questions regarding other healthcare professions.
- Larger sample size and further randomization of participant recruitment would prove to be beneficial in a future study.

Summary

- 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
- Advocacy

References

- 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
- 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>

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our faculty mentor, Dr. Erin Melhorn, as well as the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Occupational Therapy Doctorate program for their guidance and leadership throughout this study. We would also like to thank Mr. Charles Hart and Ms. Amanda Benjamin for their statistical knowledge and assistance. Lastly, we would like to thank the participants that took part in this study. Their time and knowledge is greatly appreciated.

Powerpoint template adapted from UTC templates found here:
<https://www.utc.edu/communications-marketing/graphic-guidelines/powerpoint.php>

Questions?