An Exploratory Study Examining Interprofessional Collaboration between Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy Practitioners and Students.

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between occupational therapy and physical therapy students and practitioners. Historically there has been limited research conducted that pertains specifically to the interprofessional collaboration of occupational and physical therapy students and practitioners. For the purposes of this study the researchers examined the relationships between occupational and physical therapy students, the relationships between practicing occupational therapists and physical therapists, and differences and similarities of their relationships with respect to variables thought to impacting interprofessional collaboration.

**Methods:** A non-experimental survey research design was used to gather and analyze information from the participants. All of the participants completed a demographic survey which sought information pertaining to variables related to interprofessional collaboration such as time spent with other profession, physical environment of departments, interprofessional education, etc. Students completed the Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale, a survey with questions pertaining to their readiness to learn about interprofessional collaboration. Practitioners completed the Index of Interdisciplinary Collaboration, a survey intended to gather information regarding the effectiveness and extent of collaboration between therapists. Six-hundred and thirty-six participants
completed the survey and included 305 occupational therapy students (OTS), 256 physical therapy students (PTS), 47 occupational therapists, and 28 physical therapists. Following data collection, descriptive and inferential analyses of data were completed.

**Conclusions:** Relationships were discovered between OTS and PTS readiness for interprofessional learning and gender, time spent with other profession, class size, degree working to obtain, and physical distance between occupational and physical therapy departments. Relationships were also found between the therapists’ extent and effectiveness of interprofessional collaboration and age, work experience, time spent with the other profession, and physical distance between occupational and physical therapy offices. Greater readiness for interprofessional learning was demonstrated by OTS when compared to PTS. There was no difference for extent and effectiveness of interprofessional collaboration between occupational and physical therapists.

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**Occupational Therapists Perspectives on Psychosocial Treatment of Sexual Dysfunction of Mental Health Patients**

Siefert, Brittany and Troudt, Joe

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of mental health occupational therapists about psychosocial treatment of sexual dysfunction with clients in psychiatric facilities.

**Methods:** Using a qualitative methodology, student researchers interviewed six occupational therapists practicing in psychiatric settings as part of an exploratory study into the perceptions of clinician about treatment of sexual dysfunction with people who have mental health disabilities. Semi-structured interviews utilized open-ended questions. Electronic recording of interviews were utilized and verbatim transcripts were obtained. Data was analyzed and codes and themes were developed.

**Results:** Three themes emerged to capture the consensus of evidence as described by the occupational therapists: scope of practice, perceived barriers, and client-centeredness. Their perspectives contribute to our understanding of psychosocial treatment of sexual dysfunction in the mental health and the role of occupational therapy in working with this population.

**Discussion:** The results have implications for future practice among mental health practitioners treating sexual dysfunction. Occupational therapists have it within scope of practice to address sexual dysfunction as it relates to the occupational therapy practice framework. The framework provides a guideline in providing occupational therapy interventions. Andamo (1980) has developed a treatment model for occupational therapy practitioners in treating sexual dysfunction. In addition, Annon (1976) developed the PLISSIT Model as an approach in treating for sexual dysfunction. Occupational therapy practitioners are qualified to provide the first three levels of the PLISSIT intervention model to clients affected with sexual dysfunction (Friedman 1997).

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**Treating Adults with Chronic Pain: Exploring the Contemporary Trends of Occupational Therapy**

Jennifer Gough and Laura Roush

**Purpose:** The aim of this study was to explore occupational therapy’s approach in treating individuals with chronic pain. More specifically, to evaluate occupational therapy’s role in current practices including assessments, models of practice, modalities, and competencies.
Methodology: Following IRB approval, a purposive sampling method was used to gain a sufficient number of participants to complete an online survey. Inclusion criteria for participants in this study included occupational therapists currently working in an outpatient setting, current members of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), and practicing within the states of Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Colorado, and Nebraska. Subjects were requested through a postcard notice to complete an online survey regarding the treatment of individuals with chronic pain. Survey questions pertained to 1) types of evaluations, 2) models of practice, 3) effectiveness of modalities, 4) collaboration approaches with other professionals, 5) primary sources of accessing information, and 6) number of workshops/continuing education sessions regarding chronic pain taken within the past three years.

Results: Thirty-five surveys were completed and submitted for an 8.8% rate of response. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample demographics which included years of practice and average number of clients with chronic pain treated per week. A majority of the overall sample (54.28%) report having been in practice for 1-10 years. Twenty-three participants (65.71%) treat an average of 1-2 clients per week with a primary diagnosis of chronic pain. A tabulated proportion was used to correlate “competent” practitioners with the following variables: 83.3% use subjective client reports for primary methods of client evaluation; 76.67% use the Rehabilitative model; 60% rate massage as the most effective modality to treat chronic pain; 66.67% work collaboratively with other professionals more than 50% of the time; 73.33% do not refer clients to other pain specialists; 73.33% use research journals or medical websites as primary sources of education; and 53.33% have not attended any continuing education workshops regarding chronic pain within the past three years.

Summary: A low rate of response limited the researchers’ ability to indicate significant findings associated with the study’s variables. However, the results from this study indicated the need for more critical analysis of its contents. Results suggested that occupational therapists in outpatient settings are not largely utilizing occupation-based evaluations and models of practice when treating individuals with chronic pain. Furthermore, participants demonstrated a reliance on collaboration with other peers, research journals, and medical websites versus formal education sessions when attaining chronic pain knowledge. Implications of this approach may negatively influence occupational therapy’s ability to maintain true to the foundational perspectives unique to the profession. Results of this study demonstrate the need for future research to deeply investigate the factors associated with effective occupational therapy treatments for clients with chronic pain.