

**2012 Independent Studies**

**Dr. LaVonne Fox**

**Sexuality, The Missing Activity of Daily Living: A Pilot Study** Lindsay Farkas, MOTS, Elizabeth Reynolds, MOTS & Advisor: Dr. LaVonne F. Fox, Department of Occupational Therapy, University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences, 501 North Columbia Road, Grand Forks, ND 58202

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to explore the comfort level of occupational therapists/occupational therapy assistants addressing sexuality with clients in physical disability clinical settings in the Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. A secondary intention of this study was to explore why or why not OTs are addressing sexual issues with their clients, and if therapists are addressing sexual issues, what resources are utilized.

**Methods:** A non-experimental design pilot study was conducted to explore the comfort level of occupational therapists addressing sexual issues with clients in physical disability settings. A mixed-methods, triangulation survey design was used to gather data from occupational therapy participants in physical disability settings. Participants completed a 16 question Likert scale survey which also included comment boxes to provide opportunity for participants to further expand on answers. 45 occupational therapists from Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin completed the survey. Following data collection, statistical analysis was completed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 19. Qualitative data was analyzed by developing codes, forming categories and finally establishing themes based on the participants comments.

**Conclusions:** The results of the study indicate that there are occupational therapy clinicians who are addressing the issue of sexuality with their clients in physical disability settings. The occupational therapists’ comfort level, educational background, continuing education and/or access to available resources does have an impact on whether she or he will address sexual issues with clients in physical disability settings. Occupational therapists are reporting a lack of education/literature on how to address sexual issues with their clients in physical disability settings. Even though there was a small sample size of male participants in this study, the results indicate that gender does not have a significant impact on occupational therapists comfort and education/literature available on the topic of addressing sexual issues with clients in physical disability settings. An increase in years of experience has an impact on clinicians comfort addressing sexual issues with clients in physical disability settings, however years of experience does not have a significant impact on the education/literature available on this topic.

**Dr. Debra Hanson**

**Students’ Experience of Learning to Use Occupation as Intervention on Fieldwork in Medical Settings.** Kelli Atkinson, MOTS, Nicole Knutson, MOTS, & Dr. Debra Hanson, Ph.D, OTR/L, Department of Occupational Therapy, University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, 501 North Columbia Road, Grand Forks, ND 58202.

**Purpose:** There are few studies that focus on students’ experiences of fieldwork; specifically, investigating how students learn to use occupation. In addition, there is limited research regarding the students’ learning to use occupation-based interventions in medical settings. The purpose of this independent study was to explore students’ experience of learning to use occupation as intervention on fieldwork in medical settings and specific strategies used by students and fieldwork educators for learning to use occupation as intervention.
**Methods:** A phenomenological, qualitative research design was used with this study. Participants were recruited through the use of the University of North Dakota occupational therapy department fieldwork listserv. Purposive sampling was used to obtain the research study sample. A one-hour semi-structured focus group interview was completed for data collection. Data analysis consisted of initial coding performed by two researchers. Codes were separated into categories. From the categories, themes emerged and were confirmed by a third researcher. Throughout data analysis, triangulation was used to increase validity of the study.

**Results:** Researchers found four major themes including: (1) students’ understanding of occupation and the continuum of practice; (2) students identification of barriers to implementing occupation-based practice; (3) influence of the fieldwork educator; and (4) supports for students use of occupation as intervention. Each theme is supported by quotes derived from participants’ statements during the focus group.

**Conclusions:** Four supports for students’ experience of learning to use occupation as intervention on fieldwork in medical settings developed including student initiative, hands-on experience/observation, the academic setting of the OT program, and the use of assessments and evaluations. Participants more readily identified barriers to implementing occupation-based practice as compared to identifying supports to learning to use occupation-based practice. In addition, students desired to have a more collaborative learning experience with their fieldwork educators for learning to use occupation as intervention while on fieldwork in medical settings.

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**THE USE OF OCCUPATION-BASED INTERVENTIONS IN LONG-TERM CARE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY.** Amy Jo Jensen, MOTS, Mallory Carlson, MOTS Advisor: Sonia Zimmerman, Ph. D., OTR/L, FAOTA. Department of Occupational Therapy, University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences, 501 North Columbia Road, Grand Forks, ND 58202

**Purpose:** To explore occupational therapists’ use of occupation-based interventions in long-term care facilities.

**Methodology:** A literature review was completed on the use and effect occupation-based intervention has within a long-term care practice setting. Based upon the findings of this literature review, a qualitative research study was conducted using a grounded theory approach adopted from Strauss and Corbin (1998). Six occupational therapists working in long-term care facilities in Minnesota were recruited through purposive sampling using convenience and snowballing techniques. Each participant was interviewed once using a semi-structured interview. Data from the interviews was then coded and grouped into categories. Themes emerged from the categories and represented participants’ use and perception of occupation-based interventions in long-term care.

**Results:** The data revealed five categories including participants’ focus of current interventions, barriers to occupation-based interventions, occupation-based intervention characteristics, participants’ perception of job, and facilitators of occupation-based interventions. From these categories, three themes were developed: 1) varying degrees in understanding of occupation-based intervention, 2) complexity of long-term care practice setting, and 3) impact of reimbursement on occupational therapy services. Two assertions emerged from the categories and themes. The first assertion was occupational therapists could benefit from additional knowledge regarding the application of occupation-based interventions in practice. The second assertion was, given the complexity of the long-term care practice setting, occupational therapists could benefit from strategies to overcome barriers that are present for implementing occupation-based interventions.
Discussion & Recommendations: Although there were varying degrees in understanding of occupation-based intervention, participants reported functional and purposeful tasks provide clients with success and greater life satisfaction. The results of this study indicate the need for further and continued education on current occupational therapy language regarding the understanding and use of occupation-based interventions in long-term care. Additionally, therapists working in long-term care could benefit from implementing occupation-based model-driven therapy to assist with providing occupation-based intervention from evaluation to discharge. Future research is suggested to increase the strength of the current findings, and provide occupational therapists with evidence supporting the use of occupation-based interventions and how they affect the care provided in long-term care. Additionally, research that focuses on the client’s perception of occupational therapists use of occupation in therapy would also be beneficial.