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Home-based rehabilitation: Occupational therapy students' perspective

Marija Tomsic

UL, Faculty of Health Sciences, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Introduction: Home-based rehabilitation (HBR) in under-resourced areas in a primary healthcare context exposes Occupational therapy (OT) students to the real-life situations. There is a scarcity of literature on student experiences of HBR in the OT context. This study sought to discover the perceptions of OT students relating to their experiences in a resource-constrained setting.

Objectives: The aim of this study was to explore what bachelor OT students perceived to be important for good learning experiences and what they fear in clinical practice.

Method: The data were collected with a focus group interview, including fourteen OT students who were in their final year of study. A qualitative analysis was conducted using Atlas.Ti programme. In order to explain the researched findings and to form grounded theory, only certain categories were taken into consideration.

Results: The paradigmatic model presents categories: preparation for (review of the literature, information retrieval from colleagues), expectations of students (independent work, acquiring new knowledge/experience and the transfer of theoretical knowledge into practice) and apprehension before the implementation (doubt in one's abilities, lack of experience), meeting expectations (exceeded or satisfied, new methods of implementation), benefits of HBR (greater student independence, positive implications/improvements in mobility or well-being of clients), motivation for further work (weekly meetings, work in pairs) and professional competences (useful knowledge and experience, professional identity).

Conclusion: Exposure to real-life situations provides valuable situated and authentic learning opportunities for OT students. The experience can be useful in preparing graduates to address the needs of the populations who need long-term care.