

Multiple histories of occupational therapy in the context of Latin America: arrival, institutionalization and early years of development of the profession

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The history of occupational therapy is constructed and reported from diverse perspectives and points of view that are related to different historical and social contexts. Occupational therapy, as a profession, is a historical result of the division of social classes, with the consequent specializations of human labor in capitalist societies, and the tendency of fragmentary compartmentalization of knowledge. Historically, there has been a strong influence and interrelation between the realities of North American and European countries, with Latin America. Specifically, in the professional context, the coming of occupational therapists to promote training courses, as well as the going of Latin American occupational therapists for North America and Europe provided a context of professional exchange and learning, which had repercussions in the formats and models of theoretical-methodological perspectives in the Latin American. The objective of this research was to understand the processes of arrival of the profession, its institutionalization and the first years of development in the Latin American countries that are members of CLATO (Latin American Confederation of Occupational Therapists). The methods used in this research were: documentary research and semi-structured interviews. Eleven countries were contacted through the CLATO list of delegates, as well as a study of historical documents and interviews with occupational therapists and specific research groups in the area of occupational therapy history. Therefore, it is important to investigate the different histories of occupational therapy in the Latin American context, seeking to identify and understand the multiple processes of arrival and institutionalization in different Latin American countries.