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Increasing The Degree To Which Evidence-Based Practice Is Carried Out By Occupational Therapists At A Rehabilitation Hospital

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Introduction: Occupational therapists are expected to be evidence-based practitioners. However, evidence-based practice is not occurring in many settings.

Objective: To determine if in-service education on evidence-based practice provided to occupational therapists increased knowledge of the tools and resources necessary to become evidence-based practitioners.

Method: OTs from a rehabilitation hospital participated in a six-week in-service program about evidence-based practice. An evidence-based occupational therapist presented three interactive in-services to the group during regularly scheduled staff meetings. In between these biweekly sessions, on the three alternating weeks, each therapist received a personalized folder with independent activities to complete; activities included articles, handouts, and links to databases and videos. The project was designed to be client-centered, and therapists were encouraged to actively participate by contributing discussion topics. A pretest and posttest using the Evidence Based Practice Questionnaire (EBPQ) measured knowledge acquired during the project.

Results: Outcomes indicated that a six-week in-service education program (using combination of in-services and independent activities) increased occupational therapists' knowledge of tools and resources necessary to become evidence-based practitioners.

Conclusion: Utilization of evidence-based practice will help support OT reimbursement and expand the scope of practice, and may help with staffing justifications and support service provision. AOTA's Centennial Vision expected OTs to utilize evidence to inform practice; the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, 3rd Edition, expects the same. In-service education about evidence-based practice is a method to achieve these goals. This project demonstrates an evidence-based model for increasing occupational therapists' knowledge of the tools and resources necessary to become evidence-based practitioners.