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Development of a process protocol to guide practice in the design and construction of home modification for older and disabled people

Rachel Russell

University of Salford, Salford, Greater Manchester, UK

Home environments that support and improve people's ability to perform everyday activities of daily living provide individuals and their carers with the greatest opportunity to achieve successful ageing in place. Occupational therapists are expert in analysing the transaction between the person and their environment and they use the design and construction methods to redress the imbalance caused by the ageing process or disability. However, the role of the occupational therapist has been in the home modification process has been criticised. In particular, practitioners have been accused of clinical practice that is dis-organised and not founded on the theoretical principles of the profession. To address this problem, a study was conducted to develop a design and construction process to structure the process used by occupational therapists. To develop this process, a survey, involving 136 UK based occupational therapists was conducted. The questionnaire sought to understand the process used by practitioners involved in home modifications practice. Qualitative data generated from the questionnaire was analysed using a directed content analysis approach, with the Occupational Therapy Intervention Process Model and the Design and Construction Process Protocol acting as the theoretical frameworks for generating the codes and themes from the data. From the codes and themes, a 4 phase 9 sub-phases home modification process was developed. This paper presents the principles of the Home Modification Process Protocol and describes how it can be used to support the clinical practice and education of Occupational Therapists.