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Current and future outcome measurement for wheeled mobility and seating

Rachael McDonald

Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Rationale: Wheelchair seating is essential for people with mobility issues to participate in life, and is therefore an area of interest for occupational therapists. Recently, a plethora of wheelchair related outcome measurements have been published. How do practitioners distinguish which assessments or measurements they should use and in which situation? Furthermore, with the advent of consumer driven care and disruptive assistive technologies, should we be looking for person driven, novel solutions? Given that wheelchair use is increasing by between 7-10% per year, this is an area of importance for occupational therapists, funders and policy makers.

Objectives:

1. To share the findings of a critical review of wheelchair and seating assessments.
2. To combine 1 with a scan of innovative digital health technologies in wheelchair provision and seating.

Method: A critical literature review of wheelchair and seating assessments and outcome measures was performed and the tools reviewed for a number of factors. A literature scan of disruptive innovation in wheeled mobility and seating was also performed.

Results/Practice Implications: Wheelchair provision and seating is a developing area that is not performed well internationally; the tools available for assessment and outcome measurement are not ideal.

Conclusion: Wheelchair seating and positioning are important for the user to enhance their participation, inclusion and occupational performance. Given the multifactorial nature of this area, occupational therapy is the profession that best articulates the issues in this area, and need to be working with consumers to articulate how best to measure and advocate for need.