

**Transformation of psychiatric care towards mental health care approach in Argentina. Participation of Occupational Therapy in the construction and development of mental health field in Buenos Aires (1957-1976)**

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**Introduction:** The National School of Occupational Therapy (ENTO) was created in Argentina in 1959. Although the main immediate determinant was the polio epidemic, the training included an important load of theory and practice in mental health. The construction of legitimacy to make this possible was studied.

**Objective:** To share results of doctoral thesis that studied the training and professional practice of Occupational Therapy in the development of mental health field in Buenos Aires in 1957-1976

**Methodology:** Retrospective design with qualitative analysis of archive material and in-depth interviews with pioneers

**Results:** At first, practice in Mental Health was created to support professional training, although with novel approaches, was inscribed in isolated spaces of psychiatric hospitals. Later, opportunities for interdisciplinary and team practice emerge within a mental health model. These experiences lead to reformulation of curricula. Thus formation and practice alternate in the leadership of the transformations. Emphasis on professionalization and institutionalization of the profession, early recognition of WFOT, national and regional policies and other contextual factors facilitated the development of the profession in the field. Limited number of graduates, difficulties for the university recognition of the degree, low percentage of graduates dedicated to mental health, restriction to specialized spaces and scarce written record were limits for development.

**Conclusion:** Legitimacy of training in mental health must be seen as part of the construction of the field of mental health in Argentina. Occupational therapy was a constituent part of the field and passage from the psychiatric model to that of mental health care.