

## Exploring Primary Contact Occupational Therapy Hand Clinics: An occupational perspective

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**Introduction:** It has been suggested that hand therapists could more explicitly incorporate an occupational perspective to refocus on occupation within contemporary practice settings. Increasingly, within the healthcare system, advanced scope roles have been developed, including primary contact occupational therapy hand clinic pathways. Further research is required to understand if occupational therapists can, or desire to, maintain their unique focus on occupation whilst working in advanced scope roles.

**Objectives:** To explore the practice of occupational therapists working in Primary Contact Occupational Therapy Hand Clinics from an occupational perspective.

**Method:** An ethnographic design was used to explore the culture of occupational therapists working in these clinics to uncover the meanings behind their decisions, actions and perceptions. Data were collected from observations, semi-structured interviews and review of progress notes in the medical records.

**Results:** Three occupational therapists working in multiple sites were recruited to this study. Data was collected through approximately 30 hours of observation of over 50 patient sessions with participating occupational therapists, transcription of their corresponding progress notes and conducting six interviews with the therapists. Four key themes were identified, which covered use of language, prominence of an occupational perspective, methods used for assessment and evaluation, and the place of occupation throughout the occupational therapy process.

**Conclusion:** This research demonstrates occupational therapists' need to be consistent in using accurate occupational therapy terminology to articulate an occupational perspective to patients. It is also clear that there is more work to be done to position occupational perspectives within hand therapy practice.