Evaluating occupational therapy practice in oncology and palliative care: challenge or opportunity?

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BSc (Hons), MSc (Research)
Background

- Setting up a new service.
- Measuring outcomes has been a focus of healthcare in UK.
- Anecdotal experience.
- Final year of MSc.

(Department of Health 2010, College of Occupational Therapists 2013, Richards et al 2015).
The Study

Aim: To discover how occupational therapists in oncology and palliative care are evaluating their practice.

• Study Design
• Sample
• Data analysis
More training needed in use of outcome measures


Developing an outcome measure for all palliative stages = challenge

Small sample sizes

Difficulties recruiting patients

High attrition rates

More work needed

Little known about OT role with people with long term conditions
Findings

• Limited use of standardised outcome measures.
• Reliance on patient evaluation tools: 8 out of 10 participants using patient evaluation questionnaires only.
• Lack of training in use of outcome measures: 7 out of 10 participants had training but this was out of date and not specific.
Recommendations

• Training for students and therapists re: evaluating practice.

• Support from services.

• More research is needed to highlight the contribution of occupational therapy.
• Royal College of Occupational Therapists
  Specialist Section
  – Oncology & Palliative Care

• Publication

• Research
Challenges are opportunities in disguise...