THE TRIANGULAR COBWEB OF FACTORS HINDERING OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAMME IN UGANDA RURAL COMMUNITIES TODAY

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Occupational Therapy is the Mirror

A cobweb is not always seen until something shows it up and makes us aware

For this particular cobweb, taking OT to the grass roots exposed the cobweb

Potential hindrance to an OT intervention programme were revealed
PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

1. To better understand the challenges PWD and their families face in trying to live life to the fullest.

2. To uncover parents’ perspective on disability.

3. To discover environmental, social and cultural factors hindering occupational therapy practice in South Western Uganda.

4. Explore possibilities of how OT can be effective within these communities.
METHODS

DESIGN: Qualitative approach to describe and understand complexities of life experiences and meaning

DATA COLLECTION

- **OBSERVATIONS**: Daily life patterns and routines, work and self care activities, caregiving practices

- **1:1 INTERVIEWS**: Semi-structured format focused on:
  - Beliefs about PWD’s and Etiology of Conditions
  - Community acceptance and values for PWDs
  - Aspects of care and care systems for PWDs

- **FOCUS GROUPS**: With clients and their families within Rukungiri
  - Interactive settings; people from same community/backgrounds
FINDINGS

SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES

1. Society’s negative attitudes towards disability; disability regarded as “inability”.

2. Children with disabilities are de-valued compared to other members of the community and labelled as “second class citizens”.

3. Parents do not understand diseases and causes of disability.

4. Strong beliefs in witchcraft/curse.
OTs in Rural Community – Faced with challenges

BELIEFS

Client Disabilities

ATTITUDES

VALUES
BELIEFS: **HYDROCEPHALY**

If a pregnant mother eats a certain shaped pumpkin, she will produce this condition in her child.

If parents see a human skull during pregnancy they will produce a child with hydrocephaly.

Failure to visit and pour out liberation to the spirits in this type of rocky area will also cause the same condition.
Attitudes

1. Disability = Inability
2. Dependency fosters overprotectiveness
3. Discrimination closes doors @ school, work
4. Shame, punishment and false guilt; especially in mothers
5. Lack of community support motivated by fear
6. Families fears for future
Values and Expectations

• Male child should:
  • Herd and milk animals; collect firewood & water
  • Do well at school
  • Be security for parents in their old age

• Family and community place value occupations

• Negative impact when person is believed incapable
OT Strategies to Overcome Barriers

Create discussion groups to educate rural communities
Offer Rural Learning Life Skill Clinics
OT is the only Intervention Army in Rural Communities Today!

Let’s join hands together and penetrate through the Rocky Rural Communities of Beliefs, Attitudes and Values

Ready to meet the challenges & Rise above Disability
CONCLUSION

The author explores these challenges and offers opportunities for appropriate and effective therapy to improve the condition of PWD and facilitate a positive and hopeful focus on PWD. The struggle continues, however OTs in rural Uganda are ready to change and challenge society.