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The opinions of 'experts' in occupational health were sought to identify knowledge, skills and professional behaviours for occupational therapists (OT) and physiotherapists (PT) in occupational health (Currier et al. 2001). This was the first part of a larger study to identify knowledge, skills and professional behaviours essential for therapists in occupational health.

Objectives

To extract items from the transcripts of interviews with a panel of 'experts' to be used to inform the development a survey of a larger group in occupational health and also students on professional placement.

Method

The Leximancer™ computer program developed at The University of Queensland was used to analyse transcripts of semi-structured interviews (Smith et al. 2002). The data was analysed in 2 groups, therapists and others. Leximancer™ provided independent generation of concepts according to the proximity and frequency of occurrences of words in the text. 'Concept maps' depicted strengths and relationships of concepts and meaning was achieved by manual interrogation of the text.

Results

The top 15 ranked concepts from each group were collected. 'Work' was the top concept in both groups and concurrence was demonstrated between the next 3 ranked concepts, OT, people and physios. Nine concept statements were developed and ranked by 10/12 interviewees using a 5 point Likert scale. A mean score of 4.6 provided strong support for items.

Conclusion

Leximancer™ was useful in avoiding coder bias but further analysis of the text was required to ensure the trustworthiness of 'meaning' derived. The high confirmation rate of the nine concept statements supported their use in the larger study.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy

This study contributed to understanding the knowledge, skills and professional behaviours essential for therapists in occupational health and will be used to enhance clinical education in this field.

Currier et al. (2001). Functions and Knowledge Domains for Disability Management Practice: A Delphi Study, *Rehabilitation Counselling Bulletin*, 44, (3), 133-143.

Smith et al. (2002). Application of the Leximancer Text Analysis System to Human Factors Research (unpublished). Key Centre for Human Factors and Applied Cognitive Psychology, The University of Queensland St Lucia Queensland, www.leximancer.com/documents/hfes2002.