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Lost in translation? Finding strategies for translating innovative research knowledge into your practice

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Lost in translation? Finding educational strategies supporting research translation into therapy practice

Knowledge Translation (KT) has been described as the exchange, synthesis and ethically sound utilisation of research. Continuing Professional Education (CPE) provides a forum for experienced therapists to learn about the KT process. Studies have shown that while CPE may increase therapists' knowledge, skills and attitudes about KT, there is little evidence it changes their subsequent behaviour (Khan & Coomarasamy, 2006; McCluskey & Lovarini, 2005). A 15 credit Masters module was designed where students worked together with the module leader to develop their own individual learning strategies that would enable them to engage in knowledge translation processes in their workplace.

Objective: To develop and evaluate a module that explored individual teaching and learning approaches that would result in students' increased integration of research findings into their professional practice.

Methods: Seven practising therapists enrolled as students in an inter-professional Masters' module entitled *Implementing evidence in therapy practice*. Using collaborative action research (CAR), students collaborated with the module leader in monitoring and adapting the learning programme through iterative cycles of planning→ acting→ observing→ reflecting→ planning. Data were generated using both quantitative (student questionnaires) and qualitative (individual student interviews four months post-module; module leader's field notes; non-participant observer's notes taken during each class session) methods.

Results: Preliminary findings revealed that learning partnerships, where students collaborate with the course leader in choosing multi-faceted teaching and learning strategies, appeared to foster development of KT skills and positive attitudes about the feasibility of KT. Experiential learning linked to the reality of present-day workplace cultures encouraged ownership of the new learning and commitments to applying the skills in practice.

Contribution to the practice/ evidence base of occupational therapy:

Learning partnerships between students and educators encourages ownership of new knowledge. This, in turn, increases the likelihood that the acquired KT strategies will become embedded into therapists' professional practice.