

Recopilando Historias sobre Terapia Ocupacional en Latinoamérica: Raíces y Progreso

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Occupational Therapy in Latin America was born from the North American and British theoretical and philosophical foundations approximately 50 years ago. Over time, the profession in each country in the region increased its own knowledge base and thus modified interventions to adapt to the local necessities while incorporating global advances.

Christiansen^[1] wrote history "is the best professor". In the same document he adds that occupational therapists would be better prepared to influence and to accommodate to the changes that affect healthcare, if we understand where we are today and how we arrived here" (p.28). Following this line we think that it is important to understand Latin American occupational therapy history.

This presentation is based on bibliographical studies, interviews to Latin American colleagues, and our own experience in the development of the discipline.

The objectives of this presentation are:

- To analyze the historical bases of occupational therapy in Latin America in order to develop and project a regional professional identity
- To compare the historical trajectories of occupational therapy in the different countries in Latin America and analyze how these trajectories may have influenced their present practice

The methodology used will be descriptive. The data were obtained by surveying pioneering occupational therapists of eight Latin American countries. The information obtained from the surveys was reinforced with interviews to selected Occupational Therapists.

The analysis of data included a narrative analysis of open ended questions and a frequency table of the data obtained through the survey questions. From our point of view, we considered the history of the Occupational Therapy, like the 'memory' of the profession. It is of great importance for the development of the discipline in Latin America to document its own regional point of view as much as the world-wide history, since it informs the profession where it has been, where it is now, and where it needs to go.

[1] Christiansen Ch. Occupational Therapy: Enabling, Function and Well-Being (1997). Second Edition. Edited by Ch Christiansen & C Baum. The USA.