

How occupational therapists perceive their regulator's peer-review system

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Introduction: The mandate of a regulatory organization is to protect the public by supervising the practice of a profession by its members. One method used to achieve this goal is a peer-review system (PRS) which focuses on assessing professional competency. Although the priority of the regulatory organization is to detect the practitioners with major competency problems requiring immediate action, a PRS should also be useful to all evaluated clinicians by giving them feedback on how to improve their practice. Many regulators in occupational therapy (OT) have put in place a PRS but no published study has been found on their members' perception of the process. **Objectives:** As part of a program evaluation measuring the effectiveness of its PRS, a regulatory organization has conducted a study to appreciate its members' perception on fairness, equity, precision, justice, feedback quality, usefulness and effects on professional practice of the PRS. The goal of this study is to improve the regulator's PRS to make it more useful and meaningful for its members. **Methods:** 459 occupational therapists (OTs) assessed by the regulator's PRS in the years 2006 to 2008 were asked to complete a mailed questionnaire based on Ilgin's theory on feedback. This theory explains how feedback given to a person can modify work performance. A high answer rate of 62 % was obtained which underlines the OTs' interest to give their opinion on the topic. **Results:** The results are currently being analyzed. The completion of the study is expected by September 2009. **Conclusion:** The OT regulatory organization will use the results to make improvements to its PRS. It wants to make sure its members have a good understanding of the PRS and benefit from the feedback given at the conclusion of their participation in the PRS. **Contributions to evidence base of occupational therapy:** This project is the only known study which aims to measure OTs' perception of their regulator's PRS. This innovative study will provide data on the characteristics required from a PRS to induce changes in the OTs professional practice.