

Transforming clinical practice - exploring cultural differences

Birgit Proding¹, Andrea Weise²

¹*University of Western Ontario, London, ON, Canada,* ²*Klinik Valens - Rehabilitation Centre, Valens, Switzerland*

Introduction: Transferring knowledge from research into clinical practice constitutes a challenge for many professions including occupational therapy (OT). Conducting trans-national OT-research may have the potential to uncover national idiosyncrasies through the discussion of similarities and differences of countries. Based on these discussions and insights, knowledge transfer from research into practice as well as transformation of clinical practice might be facilitated and nurtured.

Objectives: In the frame of this paper the authors engaged in critical dialogue about the following statement: Knowledge generated within a trans-national context open fruitful discussions about how social and cultural contexts shape OTs clinical practice. The gained insight shed light on why OTs in some countries face less challenges in transferring and incorporating research findings into their clinical practice than OTs in other countries.

Description/Report: This paper is based on the authors' experience of conducting a trans-national research project within Europe. The aim of the previous research was to explore environmental factors that influence work and social life participation of people with chronic illness in two different countries. Our reflections on our previous trans-national research, our cultural contexts, our clinical work and research, and the situatedness of OT in our national medical community opened up a deeper understanding on how social and cultural factors circumscribe our clinical practice.

Results/Discussion: Critical reflections and discussions about our previously conducted research indicated that factors on the micro- (individual), meso- (institutional), and macro- (policy) level affect people with chronic diseases and also the interaction between clients and health professionals. These factors influence the provision of OT, the clients' perception and satisfaction of service provision, and national efforts to improve services. Our engagement in trans-national research opened alternative and enriching ways to exchange experiences, knowledge, and insights across national borders, and give mutual recommendations on (mono-) national struggles.

Conclusion and contribution to the practice/evidence base of OT: Based on our clinical and research experience, trans-national OT-research has the potential to unpack factors influencing OTs' clinical practice on various levels. OT-practice and research benefits from fostering trans-national collaborations as strategies and opportunities for transforming clinical practice may reveal which were not considered so far.