

## **Ergo@home. Indicators for General Practitioners regarding references for Occupational Therapy**

Leen De Coninck<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Artevelde University College, Ghent, Belgium, <sup>2</sup>University of Ghent, Ghent, Belgium

### **Introduction**

Nowadays the elderly in Western society wishes to live autonomous as long as possible. It is one of the objectives of the Occupational Therapist (OT) to let elderly live independence as much as possible in their familiar environment. In Belgium General Practitioners don't know if the problems of their clients are this severe they require the intervention of an OT. General Practitioners report the need of clear indicators regarding a reference for OT.

### **Objectives**

What are the indicators General Practitioners can rely on to whether or not proceed to application for an occupational therapeutic intervention in primary health care?

### **Methods**

To fathom the familiarity with OT, General Practitioners are subjected to semi-structured questionnaires till saturation is acquired.

By means of a study of literature, an inventory of variables is made, where occupational therapeutic interventions tend to be useful. Simultaneously is examined by means of a survey of the OT Associations if the European countries have indicators regarding reference for OT.

Using the outcome of the study of literature and the survey, a focus group formulates clues regarding the consultation of an OT in the primary health care. By means of a Delphi-study, the outcome of the focus group is checked critically by six experts (independent General Practitioners and OT's).

### **Results**

The results of the interviews shows that OT is hardly known by General Practitioners in Belgium. The survey of the European OT Associations shows that indicators are not available yet.

Finally seven indicators were operationalised.

### **Conclusion**

To meet the new social needs, transparency regarding the indication when one needs to refer to OT is indicated. By using the methodological triangulation, the scientific value of the set of indicators is increased.

Next to set up of a reliable set of indicators, it is desirable to work out a strategy of how these indicators can be known by General Practitioners.

### **Contribution to the practice/evidence base of OT**

To justify the value of OT in new and less known territories to caregivers and policymakers, a reliable scientific basis is needed. This research will contribute to this.