

A survey of assessments used in occupational therapy clinics

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Introduction. In occupational therapy practice, the assessment of clients is considered an integral part of the intervention process as it dictates the treatment intervention pertaining to the client's specific goals based on assessed weaknesses and strengths.

Objectives.

The purpose of this study was to explore the assessments used in occupational therapy clinics through identifying most commonly used assessments and the rationale for their use in different occupational therapy practice areas.

METHOD. The study utilized a non-probability convenience sample of 260 occupational therapy practitioners attending the AOTA's Annual Conference. A descriptive survey research design was used for conducting this study. The survey instrument addressed three major questions related to: (a) area of practice, (b) specific assessments used and (c) reasons for using the specific assessments. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the results.

RESULTS. Findings of the present study indicate that most of the assessments used in occupational therapy clinics target body structure and function. Assessments were used due to their availability in clinics (65.8%), clinical utility and standardization (35%), client-centeredness (30%), development by occupational therapists (18.5%), being taught in school/fieldwork (16%) and satisfying to insurance companies (10%).

CONCLUSION. It is recommended that researchers build upon this exploratory study and address the need to improve the psychometric properties of existing instruments and develop additional instruments that meet the need in occupational therapy practice for functionally oriented, client centered and occupationally focused assessments. Implications for occupational therapy education, practice and research were presented.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy. The findings of this study will contribute to occupational therapy clinicians and educators by identifying the main assessments used within different occupational therapy areas of practice thus analyzing such assessments whether they address the core concepts of occupationally based assessments or not. Also, the study findings will help in determining the value of collaboration between occupational therapy clinicians and researchers in choosing the right assessments to be taught in school and used in occupational therapy clinics.