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An evaluation of a new graduate occupational therapy rotational program

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Introduction

Job rotation, a system where staff members regularly move between different roles within an organization, is a staffing strategy commonly used in tertiary health care services. Rotation positions are typically staffed by newly graduated therapists in base grade positions.

Objectives

This poster outlines:

- factors that contribute to new graduate therapists satisfaction with rotational positions and their perspective on how well the rotational program meets their career needs
- how well the rotational positions meets the needs of the occupational therapy service and the effectiveness of the rotational system in retaining staff
- the impact of including new practice areas into the rotation
- factors that make for a successful rotational position.

Methods

The project is a mixed method study, using questionnaires and focus groups to collect data from new graduates in rotational positions, the occupational therapists responsible for providing supervision and the service managers responsible for ensuring the staffing of the services. It was conducted in a large healthcare network in Australia.

Results

Early findings suggest that some practice areas, because of their particular 'clinical' focus, have a reputation of being desirable and are more strongly sought after by new graduates. Practical issues such as geographic location of the position also influence choice of rotation. Rotational positions are seen by service managers and new graduates as a way of preparing for a future career, well beyond the current employer. Rotational positions do provide an additional workload burden on immediate supervisors. A range of strategies can be used to make the rotation more successful.

Conclusion

The project is ongoing. Job rotation provides opportunity for new graduates to gain experience and skill in a broad range of practice areas prior to specialization. The positions are particularly well regarded by new occupational therapy graduates and managers.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy.

The outcomes of this research can be used to enhance the management of rotational positions in healthcare services.