

Developing Evidence-Based Occupational Therapy in Non-English Speaking Countries

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Introduction: Evidence-based occupational therapy (EBOT) is comparatively well-known and well established in English-speaking countries. It is, however, less well established in many non-English speaking countries. This paper will explore the challenges that face non-English speaking occupational therapists who want to become evidence-based practitioners and will outline ways that these challenges might be overcome by discussing a collaborative research project between universities in Italy and the UK.

Objectives: The objectives of the research project were to utilise action research to facilitate the development of EBOT champions and to develop a model for EBOT for non-English speaking countries.

Methods: The research utilised an action research approach, using EBOT activity diaries, interviews and questionnaires to explore the EBOT knowledge, skills and attitudes of occupational therapists who participated in a series of workshops on EBOT in Italy.

Results: All of the workshop participants completed the questionnaires. A small sample of participants was interviewed before and after the workshops. Unfortunately, relatively few of the participants returned the activity diaries. Results indicated that attitudes towards EBOT were relatively positive prior to the workshops and remained positive at the end of the workshop series. Knowledge and skills in EBOT appeared to be improved by involvement in the workshops, although confidence in continued ability to utilise EBOT remained low. This low level of confidence appeared to be based on a number of factors including: lack of English-language skills, lack of relevant evidence for their practice and limited support for EBOT in Italy. Participants who completed the EBOT activity diaries also demonstrated higher levels of confidence in their EBOT skills.

Conclusion: The paper will outline the content of the workshops and explore the impact that the workshops had on the development of EBOT knowledge, skills and attitudes. The paper will conclude by outlining the model of EBOT development and exploring initiatives for developing EBOT further, particularly in non-English speaking countries.

Contribution to the practice evidence base of occupational therapy: this paper will give participants the opportunity to debate ways of facilitating the development of EBOT in predominantly non-English speaking countries.