

Occupational Therapy in the Era of E-Health Enabled Healthcare Transformation

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Introduction

Healthcare systems around the globe are straining to meet the needs of the people they serve. Faced with limited resources and ever-increasing demand, significant changes in how we 'do' healthcare is needed. We are at the start of an era where e-health systems and technologies will enable the transformation of healthcare. In this era the use of technology by healthcare professionals and consumers will become commonplace; care will increasingly be provided in the community and within the home; and, technologies will combine with new models of care to firmly place consumers at the centre of healthcare.

Objectives

In recognition of the growing importance of e-health and technology to our profession this presentation will provide an overview of international e-health trends, the impact and relevance to occupational therapy and present a role and vision for enabling OT to be effectively engaged in e-health initiatives.

Discussion

Throughout our history, occupational therapists have recognised the utility of technology in enabling occupation. Within the dimension of e-health, occupational therapists continue to be advanced adopters of technology and this presentation will highlight e-health developments and initiatives by occupational therapists which span practice, management, education and research.

Conclusion

E-health allows the effective and efficient use of health information to optimise resource use, improve health outcomes, act to inform and empower consumers to participate in the healthcare process and improve continuity of care. It is essential to enable sustainable healthcare and to improve access, quality, safety and efficiency.

Consensus and international action on these issues is mounting and now is the time for occupational therapists to ensure we are aware of these developments; to collaborate within workplaces and across continents; and to move forward with a common purpose, vision and strategy to ensure our unique perspectives shape how healthcare is delivered in the 21st century.

Contribution to the practice of occupational therapy

This presentation, on behalf of the WFOT E-Health International Advisory Group, will call for contributions from the international occupational therapy community to articulate the needs of our profession and how we may meet those needs in an era where e-health will enable healthcare transformation.