

## **Profiling and Promoting Educational Research in Occupational Therapy: A Canadian Experience**

Cori Schmitz<sup>1</sup>, Rosemary Lysaght<sup>2</sup>, Michael Lee<sup>3</sup>, Alik Thomas<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, <sup>2</sup>Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, <sup>3</sup>University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, <sup>4</sup>McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

**Introduction:** Research on occupational therapy (OT) education can provide our profession with robust evidence regarding best pedagogical practices to enhance learner development. The current body of educational research in OT suggests the need for concerted attention to barriers that may be limiting research efforts or causing innovative approaches to remain unreported.

**Objective:** A national initiative was undertaken to support and advance OT educational research in Canada.

**Approach:** A sub-committee of the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy University Programs was formed in 2013 with a focus on educational research. The following initiatives ensued: (1) a national environmental scan examining the breadth and scope of educational research among OT faculty including exploration of underlying factors impacting research activity in this area; (2) dissemination of results using three knowledge mobilization strategies; (3) establishment of a national community of practice (COP) among educational researchers for knowledge sharing and collaboration; and (4) trial of an electronic communication tool for the COP membership.

**Practice Implications:** This multi-stage process led to the profiling and promotion of OT educational research in Canada. Individual and contextual factors were identified as being associated with the conduct and dissemination of educational research. By addressing these factors we are better able to explore ongoing and future research opportunities and facilitate national collaboration.

**Conclusion:** Reflection on this Canadian initiative highlights the importance of a common vision and shared dialogue and suggests that there may be value in an international effort targeted at mobilizing broad-based cooperation and knowledge exchange amongst OT educational scholars.