

## **Perceptions of the Impact of the National Health Insurance on Occupational Therapy Services**

Lebogang Maseko, Patricia de Witt, Yasmeen Bham, Naseerah Ebrahim, Arjumand Majid, Kelisha Naidoo, Raeesa Omarjee  
*University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa*

**Introduction:** With the transformation of the health system in South Africa, the health policy and legislation arena has been dominated in 2015/2016 by the release of the White Paper on National Health Insurance (NHI). Although a White Paper is expected to provide finality on a policy in a manner which is ready for implementation, including the development of any necessary legislation, the National Health Insurance document leaves many questions unanswered. The White paper indicates the need for major changes to existing legislation is, but few details are provided on exactly how those changes might be made. This lack of clarity has created uncertainty around the impact that the NHI is likely to have on occupational therapists.

**Objectives:** To explore the perceptions held by occupational therapists in South Africa working in both the public and private sectors on the impact that the NHI is likely to have on occupational therapy practice and service provision.

**Method:** A cross sectional descriptive quantitative approach was used through a nationwide survey.

**Results:** A general lack of knowledge regarding the NHI is evidenced. Despite a negative trend towards the successful implementation of the NHI, a positive outlook of an improved public health sector as opposed to private sector exists.

**Conclusion:** The NHI and its intended objectives remain unclear to many occupational therapists, directly influencing perceptions. Keeping abreast with developments in the NHI policy space is imperative to facilitate appropriate positioning of the profession.