1118

1000 hours of Practice Education - Informed by Tradition or Evidence?

Merrolee Penman[1], Yvonne Thomas[2]
[1]*The University of Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia,* [2]*The University of Worcester, Worcester, Worcestershire, UK*

Rationale: The WFOT minimum standards for the education of occupational therapists state that all students should complete a minimum of 1000 practice education hours.

The 1000 hours has been consistent since 1963, being repeated in all consequent WFOT standard documents. While other aspects of our professional education and the graduate expectations have changed significantly since 1963, this standard remains unchanged, despite a lack of evidence to support or deny the relevance of the 1000 hours practice education standard.

Objectives: To challenge the relationship between a requirement for 1000 hours in practice education and the achievement of competency

Approach: Review of historical and current literature in occupational therapy/ other health care professions to gain an understanding of the relationship between hours completed and achievement of competency. Analysis of current educational research to determine the relationship between hours completed and achievement of competency. Interviews with international occupational therapy education experts to canvas the variety of opinions. Synthesis of data collected; proposals for alternatives presented for professional debate.

Practice Implications: In preparation for the next review of the minimum standards, further research is required. Questions to be addressed include - a) focus on hours counted, rather than achievements demonstrated; b) replication studies of existing studies, and, c) the influence of context and/or practice education model on achieving competence

Conclusion: There is limited credible evidence to confirm or deny the significance of 1000 hours, except that this is what has traditionally been accepted. The time is right to consider alternative approaches to ensuring competency.