

Spatial Analysis of Occupational Therapy Development in the Nigeria Health System: Impact, Challenges and Prospect

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Introduction: The practice of Occupational Therapy in Nigeria is believed to have started in the mid-20th century with major practices in the public Hospitals and few private practitioners in special homes and care centres. Today, the practice of OT has experienced a tremendous growth across the geopolitical zones, though with some variation within the zones. This study therefore presents a spatial analysis of the development of OT practice across the geopolitical divisions of Nigeria with a view to identifying its, values, contribution, challenges and projections for the nearest future.

Objectives: To evaluate the variation in Occupational Therapy practice across the Six geopolitical zone, vis-à-vis, its impact, challenges and opportunities in the Health sector in Nigeria.

Methods: A retrospective analysis of OT practice in the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria from 1992- 2017.. Geo spatial imaging software was used to map the concentration of OT practitioners across the zones

Results: There was a significant clustering of OT practitioners in the South-West geopolitical zone. The South- south with one OT facility had better impact (integration into the mainstream of Health service delivery and providing quality care) Educationally underdeveloped States across the zones had limited Occupational Therapy practitioners. There was consistent influx of OT practitioners to States with relatively viable economy as well as educationally developed States.

Conclusion: This study thus provides a greater insight into the impact of general education development of a State, economic viability, proximity to available training institution and individual therapist's pro-activeness in facilitating change, on the development of Occupational Therapy in Nigeria.