

1778

Development of a valid and reliable professional competence assessment tool for final year occupational therapy students in South Africa

Kobela Veronica Ramodike, Marianne de Beer, Daleen Casteleijn
University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

Introduction: Occupational therapy research has lately raised concerns about the availability of up to date assessment and objective measures of students' professional competencies during fieldwork. The position statement of the World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT) recommends collaboration between educational institutions and stakeholders for the establishment of professional competencies of occupational therapists. The researcher's observations and literature confirmed the existing gap of evidence-based studies in South Africa in this respect. This study, which formed part of a larger study, sought to identify professional competencies as a first step in the development of a valid and reliable assessment tool

Objectives: To identify expected occupational therapy students' professional competencies reported in literature.

To explore how entry level occupational therapists perceived the professional competence assessment as used at one University in South Africa.

Method: Phase I of this study employed a qualitative research design.

Two data collection methods were used. First a scoping literature review was performed followed by a self-report questionnaire sent to 50 entry level occupational therapists. Participants were selected by means of purposive sampling. Data generated was analysed by means of content analysis. Constant comparison and descriptive methods including calculation of frequencies, central tendencies and dispersion were applied.

Results: Themes and domains were identified which informed the development of the professional competence assessment tool.

Conclusion: Development of a valid and reliable professional competence assessment tool would enhance objective student evaluation.