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Working collectively to advance occupational therapy: a necessary condition for an effective evolution

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Introduction/Rationale: All professions constantly evolve in the face of new knowledge and other factors including, in recent years, increased requirements to justify services in both effectiveness and economic terms. In recent decades, occupational therapy's evolution has included clarification of its focus upon occupational enablement through an exploration of its roots and refinement of its theoretical foundations. In turn, these steps have been accompanied in many countries by a gradual repositioning of this profession's role. In sum, professions, including occupational therapy, are complex entities that evolve within complex environments. Although their successful evolution requires areas of specific expertise, for example education, regulation, research, and promotion, a global coordinated vision that is more than the sum of its parts may also be critical.

Objectives: In this presentation, I will describe the development and progress of *Occupational Therapy Canada* (OTC), a virtual association established in Canada in 2012 that includes representatives from key profession stakeholders (educators, professional regulatory colleges, professional associations, research foundation).

Approach: I will situate OTC's evolution and progress within a professions lens.

Practice Implications: I will provide concrete examples of the initiatives that OTC has promoted (e.g., economic evidence; strategic positioning of occupational therapy practice).

Conclusions: Although the evolution of the occupational therapy profession inevitably takes on different specific forms across countries, congruent with their respective contexts, OTC may serve as a useful example of a vehicle that helps this profession to progress with a coherent global and strategic orientation while continuing to exercise necessary discrete areas of expertise.