

How data can shape a department

Fiona Breytenbach, Lynn Soulsby, Nicole Mottay

Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital, Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa

Introduction: Occupational therapy departments are often faced with high caseloads, limited resources and diverse patient populations. Allocating resources and prioritizing services in these departments can prove challenging. Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital (CHBAH), situated in Johannesburg, South Africa is the largest hospital in Africa. It employs 31 occupational therapists who serve a wide range of clients in all fields of practice.

Objective: The purpose of this study was to analyse patient demographics and statistics regarding treatment to improve the efficiency of occupational therapy services rendered whilst addressing the needs of a broad population.

Approach: Data was collected from 31 occupational therapists regarding patient demographics, services rendered, and the frequency and length of treatment sessions of in-patients and out-patients seen by CHBAH's occupational therapy department over the period July 2016 - December 2017. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data at the end of every month to identify the need for staff, resources and training for prioritized patient services.

Practice Implications: As South Africa prepares for National Health Insurance, data collected by CHBAH's occupational therapy department has highlighted the need for training, research and specialized clinics in critical areas of need, and has shaped the allocation of staff and resources in order to improve the efficiency of the department.

Conclusion: Data analysis can be used as a tool to enable management to improve the efficiency of occupational therapy services rendered in their department and provide the largest impact to a diverse patient population.