

# Evaluating occupational therapy practice in oncology and palliative care: challenge or opportunity?

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# Background

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- Setting up a new service.
- Measuring outcomes has been a focus of healthcare in UK.
- Anecdotal experience.
- Final year of MSc.

(Department of Health 2010, College of Occupational Therapists 2013, Richards et al 2015).

# The Study

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Aim: To discover how occupational therapists in oncology and palliative care are evaluating their practice.

- Study Design
- Sample
- Data analysis

More training needed in use  
of outcome measures

*Small sample sizes*

More work needed

*Difficulties recruiting patients*

*Little known about OT role with  
people with long term conditions*

Lack of research

*High attrition rates*

Developing an outcome measure for  
all palliative stages = challenge

(Norris 1999, Kealey and McIntyre 2005, Harrison – Paul and Drummond 2006, Pearson et al 2007, Stevens et al 2010, Hammill et al 2014, Phipps and Cooper 2014)

# Findings



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- Limited use of standardised outcome measures.
  - Reliance on patient evaluation tools:  
*8 out of 10 participants using patient evaluation questionnaires only.*
  - Lack of training in use of outcome measures:  
*7 out of 10 participants had training but this was out of date and not specific.*

# Recommendations



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- Training for students and therapists re: evaluating practice.
  - Support from services.
  - More research is needed to highlight the contribution of occupational therapy.



**MOVE FORWARD**

- Royal College of Occupational Therapists Specialist Section – Oncology & Palliative Care

- Publication

- Research



**Challenges are  
opportunities  
in disguise...**

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