
Professional reasoning of OT in China, 1986-2006: A historical documentary research



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Background

- Physical Rehabilitation

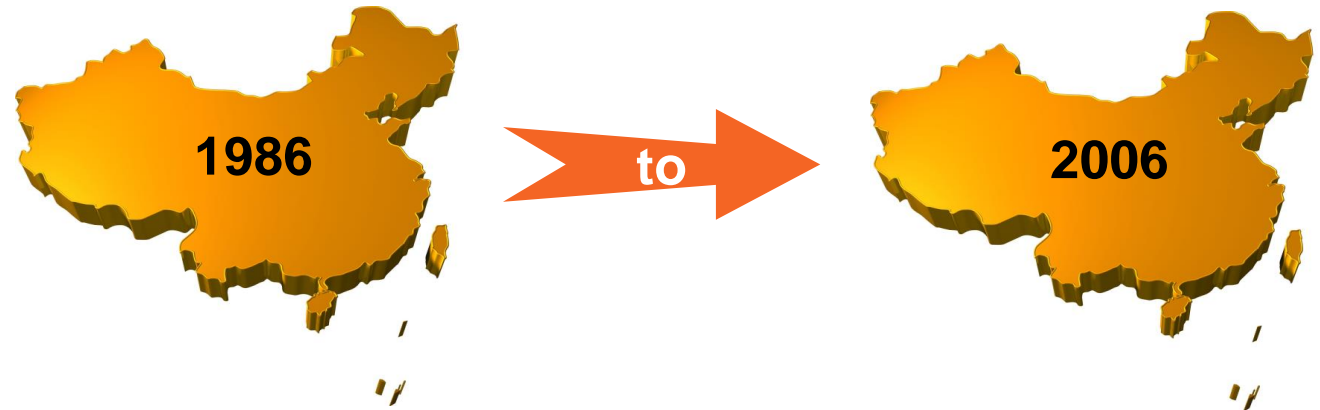
1982



- OT was developed in a cultural context unique to mainland China.
- In 1996, a National Hospital Standard defined OT as:
 - ✓ An essential rehabilitation service
 - ✓ A therapeutic approach in rehabilitation, not a health profession

Objective

- To understand the development of professional reasoning of OT in China.





Method: A historical documentary research

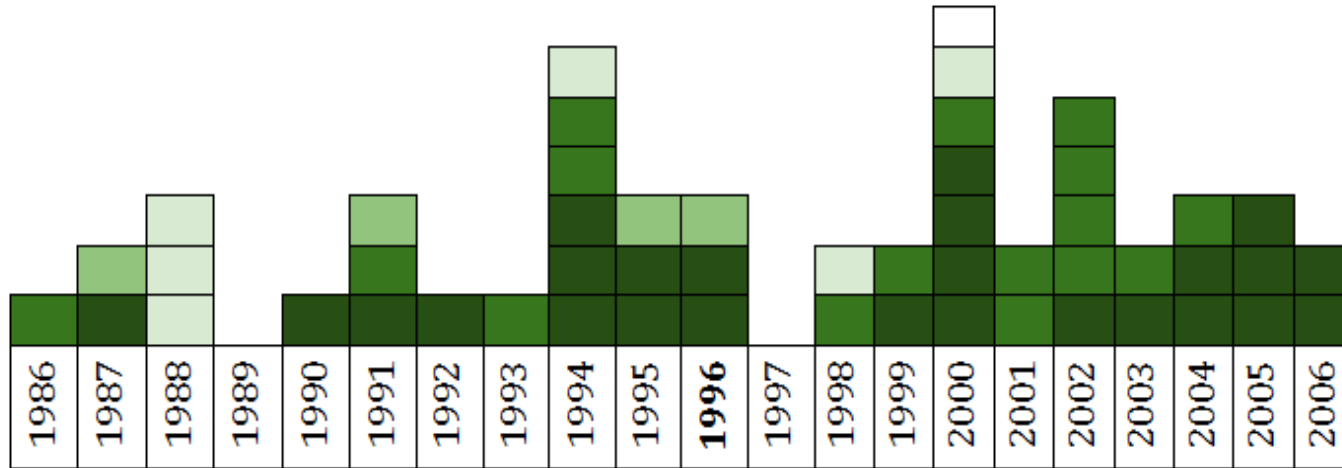
- 1) Searched OT papers from 1986 to 2006 in the Chinese Academic Journal database.
- 2) 2 researchers reviewed the professional reasoning content in each paper.
- 3) Conducted thematic analysis using an interpretive approach.

1308 papers








2 main themes

Proportion of OT content (N=52 papers)

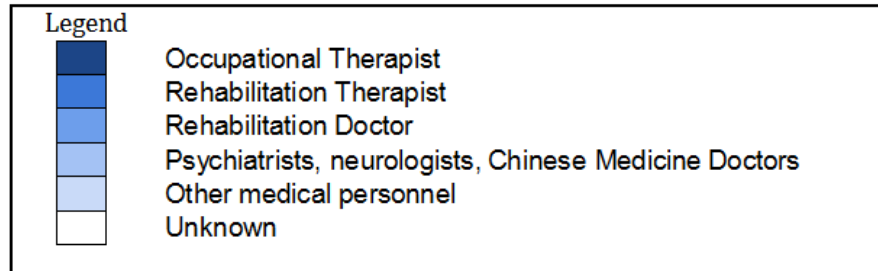
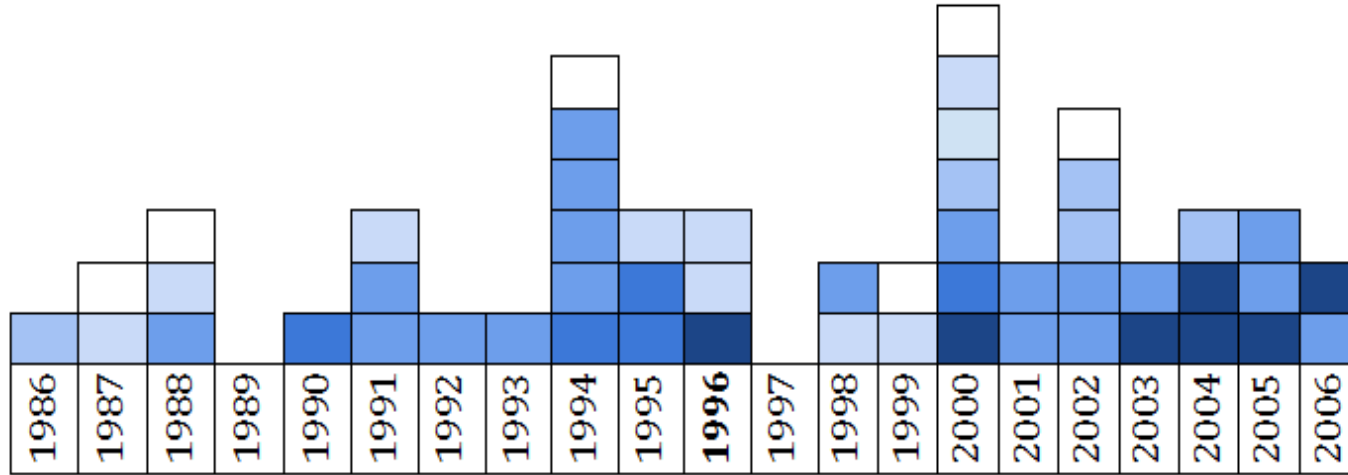


Legend

-  > 50% content about OT
-  < 50% content about OT as a rehabilitation technique
-  Introduction of international OT practice
-  Only briefly mentioned
-  Others



OT vs. other professionals as first author (N=52 papers)



Theme One: Ongoing Changes

(1) From OT being an approach used by various healthcare providers to becoming a separate profession.

- In 1996, the first paper with OT as first author was published.

	1986-1995	1996-2006
Total number of paper	21	31
Number of OT as 1st author	0	7
Percentage of OT as 1st author	0%	22.6%

Theme One: Ongoing Changes

(2) From simple and superficial to in-depth and complex professional reasoning.

“...give patients therapeutic OT activities that are interesting. They would focus on action or an exercise of muscle group kind of tra



“The learning is not about doing some kinds of exercise. Instead, it is the movement activity quality on



Theme One: Ongoing Changes

(3) From relying on overseas experience to building on local practice experience.

“Current rehabilitation practice is mostly a direct copy of the Western rehabilitation model.”

(Wang & Yan, 2000)



“Occupational therapy nowadays should not just copy from overseas practice. We must consider the conditions in our country and local contexts in the hospitals.”

(Yan, 2006)

Theme Two: Sustaining Practice Contexts

(1) Insufficient supply of qualified OT

“There is severe shortage but a great demand of essential rehabilitation personnel in our country.”

(Chen, 1988)



“The current curriculum is not designed for physiotherapy nor designed for occupational therapy. The curriculum is designed to train skill-based personnel to address the unique rehabilitation needs urgently needed in our country.”

(Wang, Chen & Xu, 2002)



Theme Two: Sustaining Practice Contexts

(2) Misconceptions of the roles and functions of OT

“Many healthcare providers do not know much about rehabilitation. They know even less about the content, function and value of occupational therapy.”

(Qian et al., 1994)

六、存在问题 ①很多临床医务人员对康复知识了解较少，对OT的内容、作用、意义了解更少。有待于进一步宣传。②OT中有一些种类如油漆、印



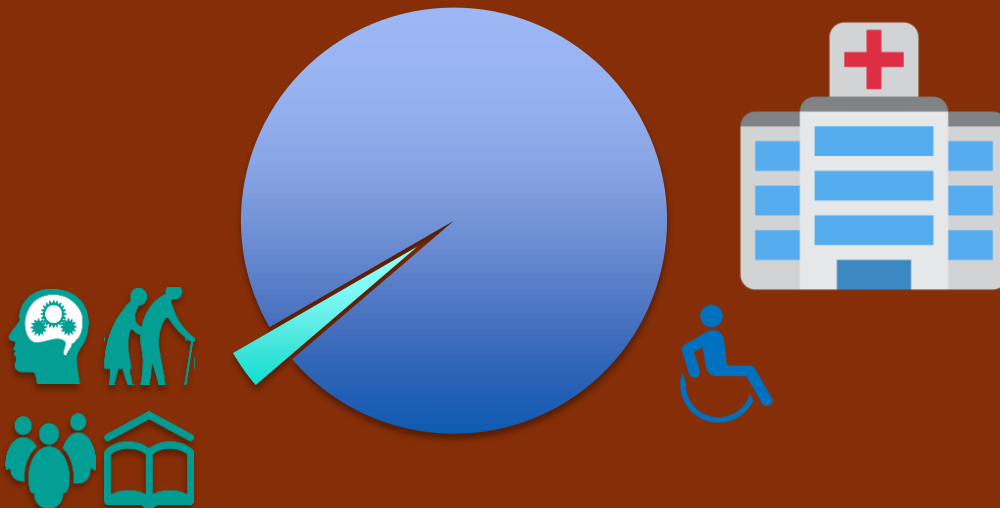
“Currently, only a few hospitals have set up occupational therapy service. In terms of treatment methods, the main approach is hands-on techniques instead of using activities. One of the reasons is limited understanding of rehabilitation by clients and family members... increase the public awareness of occupational therapy is needed... improve practice standard...”

(Yan, 2003)

Theme Two: Sustaining Practice Contexts

(3) Scope confined to hospital-based rehabilitation for people with physical dysfunction or disability

OT practice in psychiatry, community-based, school-based, and primary care is limited. The situation has not been changed over time.



Conclusion

- OT as a treatment technique, not a profession in early days.
- Improved from 1986 to 2006:
 - gained the status of a profession
 - used more in-depth and complex professional reasoning
 - local context was addressed in practice
- Unchanged, affected professional reasoning:
 - Insufficient supply of qualified occupational therapists
 - Misunderstanding of occupational therapy
 - OT confined to physical rehabilitation in hospitals



Discussion

- **The past forms the basis to develop OT in future.**
- **Another historical documentary research**
 - Textbooks published in China from 1984 to 2005
 - 42 textbooks with OT content
- **The Huang-Tu Occupation Study**
 - A new professional reasoning written in Chinese for use by OTs in China.



Acknowledgements

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the Chinese Association of Rehabilitation Medicine

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Thank you!

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