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Advocating OT Services to Medical Providers

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Advocating OT Services Among Medical Providers

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ABSTRACT

The concern for lack of awareness of occupational therapy's (OT) scope of practice led to current research exploring medical providers awareness of the profession. Interprofessional development courses that increased knowledge was found to assist with increasing understanding of the profession and future referrals to OT.

BACKGROUND

- After engaging in a national survey of physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and physical therapists, findings show evidence that OT is being underutilized by many medical providers. A national survey of registered occupational therapists (OTR) and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA) was conducted to gather their perspective on skills they want to enhance to feel prepared to educate medical providers on the breadth of OT.
- **Purpose:** Explore current literature supporting the need to create a continuing education course (CEU) for OTs.

LITERATURE REVIEW & METHODS

Electronic database searched

Sage Journals, Science Direct, The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy and Google Scholar

Search strategies: Boolean phrase, keyword searching, and forward and backwards method using the references list

Inclusion criteria:

- Occupational therapist, Occupational therapy students, Physicians, Residents, Physician assistant, Nurses, Nursing students, Nurse practitioners, Physical therapist
- Interprofessional education
- Any medical setting
- Published less than 10 years
- Education, Continuing education
- Global studies
- Open access only

Exclusion criteria:

- More than 10 years published.
- Not written in English.
- Non healthcare professionals
- Articles that did not address advocacy or education in some extent.

RESULTS

Needs assessment: National surveys

- 1,748 responses from medical providers
 - Most reported they do not know OTs full scope
 - Do not think OT is needed in areas such as mental health and emergency department
 - Seasoned providers refer more than new providers
- 667 responses from OTRs and COTAs
 - Envision a CEU course would increase their confidence and knowledge to educate medical providers
 - Areas/skills to enhance:
 - “Approaching medical providers to educate on OTs full scope”
 - “How to create quick guides or handouts for providers to reference”
 - “A concise elevator speech that would be in MDs language be more convincing”.
 - 80% report they are missing out on referrals
 - Communication and confidence to promote profession

CONCLUSION

- Advocacy for our profession is crucial to maintain the field in an upward trend and expanding to other specialty areas.
- The lack of understanding from medical providers has shown the need for a CEU course to be developed for OT practitioners.
- Goal is for OTs to develop skills to heighten awareness to medical providers of the breadth of OT.

Next Steps

- Begin capstone project
 - Creating the educational tools
 - Disseminate among OTPs at AOTA conference
 - Analyze pre-post survey



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References:

