Dr. Debra Hanson

Graydon Larsen and Shelby Hoskinson

Lived Experience of Individuals who had a Disruption in Ability to Drive

Purpose: Driving is both a highly valued occupation within the United States and an occupation that is frequently addressed by occupational therapists. According to the CDC (2017) there are more than 40 million older drivers ages 65 years or older within the United States. There is extensive research pertaining to the value of the occupation of driving as well as evaluation and treatment approaches for the occupation of driving following an injury or illness. While driving is sometimes the best option after an injury or illness, there are situations when returning to driving is not realistic or safe for the individual or others on the road. However, there is less research about the role that occupational therapists play for older adults during the transition period following a driving cessation.

Methodology: A phenomenological qualitative research design was used to gather information about individuals experiences’ related to driving disruption or cessation for older adults. Purposive sampling was utilized to locate and select subjects who met the inclusion criteria from a local retirement community/assisted living facility within the western United States. Two graduate level occupational therapy students who were trained in qualitative research used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. The graduate students and their graduate advisor using the Moustakas (1994) approach manually analyzed data from interviews. The occupation-based model, MOHO, was utilized to create an occupation-based understanding throughout the research study.

Results: As a result of data analysis, five themes were identified. The themes are as follows 1) driving is an important factor that influences life roles, 2) making sense of driving cessation, 3) strong emotional responses are associated with driving and driving disruption, 4) the importance of context in meeting needs following driving disruption, and 5) familial influences on driving disruption and transportation needs.

Conclusion: The purpose of this study is to learn about individual’s experiences and perceptions related to driving disruption or driving cessation for adults aged 55 or older. Based on the results of this study and the existing research, it is clear that occupational therapists have the skills to assist individuals following a driving cessation. Occupational therapy practitioners can utilize the firsthand information gained through this study as they prepare individuals and help them adjust to a cessation or disruption in driving.

Dr. Anne Haskins

Amy Fitzsimmons & Ashley Zimmer

Identified Stressors and Coping Mechanisms of Occupational Therapy Students

Introduction: The purpose of this study was to gather data on stressors experienced by occupational therapy students during their program and how they cope with their identified stressors. The rationale for this study was the lack of and inconsistent research regarding occupational therapy students, how they experience perceived psychological stress during their program, and how they cope with their identified stressors.

Methodology: A quantitative exploratory survey design was used to explore perceived psychological stress and coping methods in Master’s of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students. Participants were recruited through a convenience sampling method from (MOT) programs in the West and Midwest regions of the United States. Respondents completed online versions of a demographic survey, the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), and the Revised Ways of Coping Checklist (WCCL). Descriptive and inferential analysis was completed to describe the study sample and answer the research questions.
Results: The results of the PSS showed MOT students to have a moderate level of stress. The mean scores on the WCCL showed our sample of MOT students used focusing on the positive, seeking social support, and problem solving coping methods. Self-blame and tension-reduction coping methods were significantly correlated with those participants living with a significant other. Males were significantly less likely than females to use problem focused and focusing on the positive coping methods.

Conclusions: These findings suggest MOT students experience moderate levels of stress during their academic programs. Both effective and ineffective coping methods were found to be utilized to cope with perceived psychological stress.

Significance: The results from this study can assist educators when developing academic programs, and contributes additional research to previously existing evidence regarding MOT students perceived psychological stress and coping methods.

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<th>Dr. Cindy Janssen</th>
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<tr>
<td>April Schmiesing &amp; Sara Johnson</td>
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<td>Perceptions of Wellness Among Community Dwelling Older Adults</td>
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Introduction: Most older adults prefer to age in place where they are more likely to experience greater health benefits and cost savings as opposed to living in skilled care facilities. Literature supports the role of occupational therapy in community-based wellness programming that helps older adults age in place; however, there is a need to conduct needs assessments to inform wellness program topics and activities. This study explores health and wellness needs of older adults living in a low-income, senior housing complex in order to inform current health and wellness programming provided at this site.

Methodology: Researchers used a non-experimental, cross-sectional survey study design addressing the needs of community-dwelling older adults who have low incomes across 2015 and 2016. The data were analyzed using a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative methods, in the form of SPSS, were used to develop descriptive statistics, Spearman's rho, Pearson’s Correlation, Mann-Whitney U-test, and Non-Parametric Independent t-test. Qualitative methods were used to address the additional wellness program information in the 2016 survey. Thirty-one residents, ages 63 to 87 years old, living in a low-income, senior housing complex participated in the survey.

Results: Results of the survey indicated that physical, mental, and social health factors influence overall health, while dietary health is not correlated to overall health in this specific population. The most significant finding of this survey was the correlation between boredom, social health, and overall health. Participants’ who indicated they regularly experience boredom and social isolation had poorer social health, which correlated significantly with poor overall health.

Conclusion: The influence of boredom and social isolation on overall health represents the need for occupation-based wellness programming and justifies a significant role for occupational therapy in community-based wellness programs. It is imperative that occupational therapists conduct needs assessments at wellness program locations in order to address the specific needs of the populations served.

Significance: As aging in place is becoming more prevalent, this study focuses on the needs of older adults as they were addressed by a needs assessment. This information was then specifically used to guide the current health and wellness programming by occupational therapists at a low income housing complex for older adults. This study highlights the importance of occupational therapy’s role in health wellness and programming in community dwelling older adults.

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<th>Dr. Janet Jedlicka</th>
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<tr>
<td>Samantha Guenther &amp; Anna Huss</td>
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<td>Advisor: Dr. Jedlicka</td>
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<td>The Experiences of Occupational Therapy Practitioners and Students with Disabilities: A Mixed-Methods Pilot Study.</td>
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Purpose

This mixed-methods pilot study was conducted to provide insight into the experiences of occupational therapy practitioners and students with disabilities. The focus of this study was to analyze...
the effect of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) on access to reasonable accommodations. The researchers predicted that, although occupational therapy is a profession focused on advocacy for people with disabilities, reasonable accommodations are applied inconsistently for practitioners with disabilities within the OT field.

Methodology

A Qualtrics survey was sent out to occupational therapists with disabilities in order to collect demographic data and select participants for interviews. Forty-three individuals completed the Qualtrics survey. These individuals were asked to rate their difficulty obtaining reasonable accommodations in their occupational therapy programs, fieldwork settings, and workplaces. Data from the survey was analyzed using SPSS.

Five participants fell within the inclusion criteria for the qualitative portion of the study; all five individuals participated in a one-hour follow-up interview. The interviews focused on the participants’ experiences as occupational therapy practitioners with disabilities. The participants answered questions about the process of obtaining reasonable accommodations and disclosing their disabilities to faculty members, fieldwork supervisor, and employers. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded using qualitative analysis procedures.

Results

The results of the Qualtrics survey were not statistically significant. However, it was found that as average difficulty obtaining accommodations increased, the average hours worked per week decreased. Additionally, when year of graduation was considered, it was found that average difficulty obtaining accommodations decreased for people graduating after the ADA was implemented in 1991 and then again for those who graduated after the amendment in 2008. It was noted in each graduation year grouping (before the ADA, before the ADAAA, and after implementation of the ADAAA) at least one person rated their difficulty obtaining accommodations as a seven or above and average difficulty in each category remained above a four.

Conclusions:

The findings support a potential barrier to full-time work is access to reasonable accommodations. The researchers concluded that, although there has been a decrease in average difficulty obtaining accommodations, there is still a need for improvement. The qualitative interviews resulted in the following assertion: Occupational therapists with disabilities continue to face discrimination in school, fieldwork, and workplace settings in the form of a lack of access to reasonable accommodations. Those who were unable to obtain reasonable accommodations credited their challenges to internal, external, and systematic barriers, whereas those who experienced success in obtaining reasonable accommodations credited their success to strong support systems and self-advocacy skills. Despite possible challenges, occupational therapists with disabilities valued their place in the field of occupational therapy, believing they brought a unique set of skills and perspective to the profession.

### Professor Breann Lamborn

| Brooke Friederichs & Olivia Isaacson | Sexuality in healthcare: The perceptions of providers regarding role delineation. Are occupational therapists overlooked? |

**INTRODUCTION:** The responsibility to address sexual activity is not clearly delineated to one certain healthcare profession, and therefore it often goes unaddressed (Rimmer et al., 2010). In addition, there is an overall lack of literature regarding the extent to which healthcare providers understand the role of occupational therapy in addressing sexual activity.

**OBJECTIVES:** The purpose of the study was to explore 1) how healthcare providers (physical therapists, occupational therapists, and registered nurses) perceive role delineation when addressing patient concerns about sexual activity 2) the level to which physical therapists and registered nurses believe sexual activity is outlined in the scope of occupational therapy.
METHODS: A nonexperimental, prospective, 20-question quantitative survey was distributed to 126 healthcare providers (physical therapists, occupational therapists, and registered nurses). Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 24® to determine significant relationships.

RESULTS: There was a response rate of 30.2% (n=38). The results indicated that occupational therapists and registered nurses considered sexual activity to be outlined in their own scope of practice to some degree, while physical therapists did not. Professions outside of occupational therapy are uncertain about occupational therapy’s role in addressing sexual activity. Identifying which professions feel sexual activity is a part of their scope of practice may lead to increased inclusion of sexual activity in treatment, clearer referral pathways, and a better understanding of interdisciplinary role delineation.