

The Future Of Occupational Therapy In Rehabilitation Sciences: Global Impact

Occupational therapy (OT) is a part of quality care that adds value in holistic team of health care since it focuses on assisting people across the lifespan to recover, grow, or enhance life skills to live autonomously, productive, and content. In its least complex terms, occupational therapists assist individuals of all age group to take part in life activities with interest and desire through the beneficial use of everyday activities (occupations). Occupational Therapists (OTs) serve diverse population and diagnoses that may include mental health, psychiatric and psychosocial conditions (i.e., depression, anxiety), pediatric and developmental conditions (i.e., developmental delays, autism), geriatric conditions (i.e., dementia Alzheimer type), neurological conditions (i.e., stroke, spinal cord injuries, hand injuries), physical conditions (i.e., burns, fractures), and any other conditions that restrict participation and functional performance for individuals.

OTs can also work at different places, including hospitals, medical and community rehabilitation centers, mental health, educational and scientific research institutions, schools, nursing homes for the elderly, and home care³. The 2019 report of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) estimates that there are more than 550,000 practitioners of the occupational therapy profession in more than 94 countries around the world and the occupational therapy profession has grown in the past 50 years and the demand for this specialization has increased significantly⁴.

Occupational therapy has been incorporated in rehabilitation and tele-rehabilitation services and its inclusion fostered teamwork and integrated evidence-based intervention planning which is an ideal practice in health care. OT proved to be helpful and powerful in overseeing manifestations of an assortment of issues and improving and additionally keeping up utilitarian execution for people with incapacities or wellbeing related issues.

The struggle over century has concluded occupational therapist role as one of the significant addition in interdisciplinary rehabilitation team for better prognosis and quality care, public awareness about OT is relatively low indicating a gap in how they understand OT and a need for the inclusion of OT in the medical and health sciences educational programs and curricula. A recent study indicated that health care professionals have poor knowledge about occupational therapy (49.35%) with the highest percentage of knowledge about occupational therapy in physicians (51.97%)¹⁰. Another study reported that only (59.1%) have heard of OT, around 67.3% were unsatisfactory about their knowledge in OT whereas, (89.8%) showed interest to be educated about OT. Launching outreach campaigns and conducting educational programs among healthcare professionals and public to bring issues to light and improve local area insight and information on the occupational therapy profession is crucial¹¹. There is a critical need for more occupational therapists worldwide to serve the increasing health, psychosocial, developmental, and cultural needs of community members.

The job outlook for OT is bright and promising! The most recent earnings information for OT indicated that Occupational Therapists' salary was ranked number 9 in the best healthcare jobs and the salary outlook has been increasing for decades¹². Employment of Occupational

Therapists is projected to grow 24% from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations.

Occupational therapy is a one of the auspicious carriers, OT practitioners with specialty make tremendous difference in the outcome such as hand therapist, driver rehabilitation, low vision rehabilitation, sensory integration therapist, wheelchair seating, assistive innovation and technology, design & accessibility consultation for playgrounds, schools, or organizations.

Occupational Therapists (OTs) work with people of all ages from newborns to older adults improve health and quality of life. It is an absolute essential in assisting people recuperate their independence and ability to do what they love and enjoy in life. Occupational Therapy (OT) is equally as important as other health professions. Promotion of such effective health-related professions in the community is essential and enhances health and quality of life for all people. Our call to action is for all Occupational Therapy practitioners and students in the world, as the best ambassadors for supporting our profession by promoting the unique value and role of OT and enhancing community awareness worldwide of our great profession. Public awareness campaign are recommended and help create accurate and powerful images of the distinct value of the occupational therapy profession.

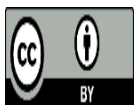
Moreover, COVID -19 has increase the demand of profession globally since the damaging effects of virus are impacting an individual for more than six months. The ongoing post COVID issues involve breathing difficulties, fatigue, balance issues, cognitive impairment, delirium and short-term memory problems that occupational therapist handles well during post COVID rehabilitation. The real work start when the patients join back their regular life style and find out that they are unable to have occupational performance at the same pace as previously. To facilitate and regain previous roles, habit and routine it takes months. Billions of people all over the world is suffering from it, in developing countries there are structured rehab frame work for occupational therapy where as in developing countries they are still struggling. The only profession that can assist in reestablishment of previous lifestyle is occupational therapy.

World Health Organization has also included occupational therapy in the holistic team of health care thus to promote quality care, this profession is an integral part for value care

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