Abstract

The objective of this study was to specify and quantify occupational therapists’ perceptions surrounding evidence-based practice (EBP). Researchers utilized the Revised Evidence-Based Practice Process Assessment Scale (EBPPAS) developed by Rubin and Parrish (2011). The survey was prefaced with demographic questions developed for this study. Therapists indicated their level of agreement with 45 statements within 5 sub-sections: (1) Familiarity with EBP process (2) Attitudes about the EBP process (3) Feasibility of engagement in EBP process (4) Intentions to engage in EBP process (5) Frequency of current engagement in EBP process.

Survey Tool: EBPPAS

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Methodology

Cross sectional survey questionnaire design. Utilized an exhaustive convenience sample of licensed therapists practicing at a large Midwest healthcare system. Participants included only licensed and registered occupational therapists, including full-time and part-time therapists. Occupational therapy assistants were excluded.

Survey Distribution

• Directors of rehab distributed hard copy and electronic surveys to occupational therapists in their facilities.
• Responses returned by mail, electronically or picked up by the researchers.

Demographics

• N= 26 licensed occupational therapists
• Highest educational degree: bachelors (7), masters (10) and doctorate (9).
• Years in Practice: <1 yr. (2); 1-5 yrs. (9); 6-10 yrs. (7); 11-15 yrs. (1); 16-20 yrs. (0); >20 yrs. (7).
• Age: 24-34 yrs. (15); 35-44 yrs. (5); 45-54 yrs. (4); 55-64 yrs. (2).

Results

Total response rate of 58% was achieved after nine weeks (n=26). Two comparison groups were identified based on age and number of years in practice. Significant results are reported as follows.

Familiarity with EBP: On average all therapists were familiar (3.78).
• Years in practice: Therapists practicing five years or less were more confident than those practicing 6 years or more.

Attitudes about EBP: On average all therapists report a positive attitude (3.71). No other significant data found.

Feasibility of engagement in EBP: On average therapists felt it was not feasible (2.96).
• Years in practice: Those practicing 5 years or less indicate EBP is feasible while those practicing 6 years or more disagree.
• Age: Younger practitioners (age 26-34) reported the EBP process is feasible while practitioners aged 35-64 years did not.

Intentions to engage in EBP: Overall, therapists intend to engage (3.28).
• Frequency of current engagement: Overall, they currently engage “some of the time” (3.02).
• Significant correlation was found between intentions to engage and current engagement.

Implications

Themes identified as important considerations for EBP usage include:

• Implications for education as it relates to training in the EBP process
• Time as a major barrier to EBP feasibility.

Understanding OT’s perceptions around the topic of EBP may provide all stakeholders with information to guide reimbursement formulas, develop better information management and technical support policies, as well as implement training and education strategies.

The findings of this study are intended to guide administrators, policy makers and educational institutions on supporting efficient utilization of EBP.

References