

May 2008 Research

Occupational Therapy May 2008 Graduate Research Presentations

Title: Exploring Children's Video Game Use from an Occupational Perspective

Presented By: Brenda Hamersley, OTS; Timothy Purcell, OTS; Rene' Torwich, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Ellen McLaughlin, Ed.D.

Research Committee Reader: Amy Lynch, MS, OTR/L

The purpose of the study was to provide a descriptive analysis of the patterns of video game usage among a population of children in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The survey was designed to describe patterns of video games usage, identify behavioral signs of impulse control problems related to video game playing, and document the frequency of participation in childhood occupations. Results from 711 respondents identified that 83 % were active video game players, and 17% were non active video game players. The most frequent time spent per weekday was 0-15 minutes (34.50%), and during the weekend was 30-60 minutes (28%) in this occupation. For those children identified as "excessive players", there was an increased likelihood of behavioral signs of impulse control disorder. Results did not support any significant differences between the occupational patterns of those children who were at risk or excessive video game players and the general population of children. Further research may focus on the coping patterns of children who remove video games from their occupational profile, the impact that culture has on leisure interest such as video game playing and possible links between sedentary lifestyles and video game playing.

Title: Exploration of the Experiences and Meaning Behind Altruistic Group Activities Among Long-Term Care Residents

Presented by: Rachel Haley, OTS; Erin Moravec, OTS; Holly Young, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Joseph Cipriani, Ed.D., OTR/L

Research Committee Reader: Gwen Bartolacci, OTD, OTR/L

Abstract:

Objective. A phenomenological investigation and exploration was conducted of the experiences of LTC residents as they planned, participated, and reflected on engaging in an altruistic activity. The meanings from these experiences were explored. Method. Eight residents of a LTC facility planned and engaged in the altruistic activity of creating flower arrangements, cards and crosses for local hospice patients. In-depth group and individual interviews were conducted. The process of data analysis was guided by the empirical, phenomenological, psychological (EPP) method.

Results. A grand theme of 'connectedness' emerged through findings supported by four underlying sub-themes: 'creative activities', 'sense of community', 'fosters reminiscence', and 'reciprocation'.

Conclusion. Through engagement in an altruistic activity participants developed a sense of connection with their pasts, others in the group, the recipients, and the activity itself through the expression of creativity. Findings suggest that OT services should include altruistic activities in interventions in order to develop a greater sense of connection for their clients.

Title: A Qualitative Study Assessing the Availability of Health and Community Services for the Elderly Living in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Presented by: Heather Fleming, OTS; Kristin McClain, OTS; Devon Saltzer, OTS; Jenna Sejuitt, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Dr. Gwen Bartolacci

Research Committee Reader: Dr. Joseph Cipriani

Abstract: The purposes of this study were to: (a) identify the availability of health and community services for the elderly living in rural areas of northeastern Pennsylvania, (b) identify the health and social needs of the elderly and (c)

recommend occupational therapy interventions that will help older adults remain independent within the community. Methods of data collection included a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Nine older adults participated in the study. Eight participants identified health care services as adequate. The results of this study also addressed participants' engagement in senior center activities as well as quality of life issues.

Title: Home Modifications Made by Older People as a Result of Cougar Home Safety Assessment (Version 4.0) Recommendations.

Presented by: Jodi Kozlecar, OTS; Amanda Rompilla, OTS; Keira McMenamin, OTS; Laura Kintner, OTS; Karla Mahonski, OTS; Diane Costulas, OTS; Erin Bradley, OTS; Jillian Woods, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Dr. Grace Fisher

Research Committee Reader: Mrs. Dawn Evans

Statistical Analysis: Dr. Jay Stine

Abstract:

Objective. The purpose of this study was to determine if recommendations made as a result of the administration of the Cougar Home Safety Assessment Version 4.0 (CHSA 4.0) were effective in causing older residents to make environmental safety modifications in their homes.

Method. Initial data were collected during the administration of the CHSA 4.0 in the homes of 40 older people age 50-96 years in four northeastern states. After completing the initial assessments, the researchers provided the participants with recommendations for improving the environmental safety of their homes. Approximately one month later, each home was reassessed with the CHSA 4.0. Results. Overall improvement in environmental safety was demonstrated in the homes, with the greatest increases in fire safety, emergency number placement, and bathroom safety. A t-test demonstrated a significant gain in compliance ($p < .001$) by comparing initial and reassessment ratings for each of the CHSA 4.0's 78 criteria. A large effect size (Cohen's d) was also calculated, indicating a high magnitude increase between initial and re-assessment safety ratings.

Conclusion. The assessment proved to be beneficial in increasing the environmental safety of the homes.

Title: Outcomes Research in a Psychiatric Sensory Occupations Group.

Presented by: Cheryl D'Auria, OTS; Vyacheslav Suhostavskiy, OTS; Andrea McCormick, OTS; Peter Esosa, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Dr. Grace Fisher

Research Committee Reader: Christine Hischman

Abstract:

Objective. The objective of this study was to track 8 male adult inpatients who had severe and persistent mental illness both before and during their participation in an occupational therapy sensory based occupations program in a state psychiatric hospital to identify any behavioral changes which may be related to their participation in the program.

Method. A retrospective behavioral inventory was used to track eight participants' use of stat medications, interactions with staff and peers, privilege levels, program attendance, and psychiatric emergency incidents.

Results. Behavioral improvements noted during participation in the Sensory Connection Program (SCP) included a decrease in psychiatric emergency incidents, a decrease in quantity and severity of negative behaviors, and increased positive interaction with staff and others. No outstanding improvements were noted in stat medication usage or privilege levels.

Conclusion. Results indicated positive behavioral gains for the participants. Further research is needed to demonstrate the therapeutic benefits of sensory based occupational therapy programming.

Title: Criteria for Occupational Therapy Services in School-Based Practice

Presented by: Amanda Richenberg, OTS; Amber Wallace, OTS; Rachel Houck, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Dr. Lalit Shah

Research Committee Reader: Dr. Grace Fisher

Abstract: This study sought to identify inclusion and discontinuation criteria used by occupational therapists within the school system and to determine if these criteria were clear and effective. An in depth literature review was completed as well as a telephone survey. Ten occupational therapists were interviewed and the information that they provided was analyzed and compared to the information from the literature review. This study found that the criteria for inclusion and discontinuation were not clear, leaving much room for interpretation. The response was mixed as to what could or should be done to create clearer criteria. This information will be used by a subsequent research group to prepare and distribute a nationwide survey to current practitioners in school based practices.

Title: Current Practice Trends of Sensory Integration Based Treatment Approaches Used in Occupational Therapy for Children with Sensory Modulation Dysfunction

Presented by: Melissa A. Abrams, OTS; Victoria E. Ginder, OTS; Lisa C. Mitchell, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Dr. Lalit J. Shah Ed.D., OTR/L

Research Committee Reader: Mrs. Jen Washko, MS, OTR/L

Abstract: Sensory Integration (SI) frame of reference is one of several frames of references used in pediatric practice. Sensory Modulation Dysfunction (SMD) has been identified as a prevalent condition in children with and without disability. Many of these children with SMD are treated using SI principles. The purpose of this research was to develop a better understanding of current practice trends in treatment of SMD. Five hundred members of the American Occupational Therapy Association Sensory Integration Special Interest Section (SI SIS) were surveyed. One hundred and twenty-six members responded resulting in a 25.2% response rate. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) was identified as one of the most common diagnoses associated with SMD. Data analysis revealed that the most common clinical symptoms identified were tactile defensiveness, proprioceptive problems and auditory sensitivity. The most identified intervention strategy for tactile defensiveness was the brushing program. Active joint compression was the most identified intervention strategy for proprioceptive problems, while gradual exposure to sound was the most identified intervention strategy for auditory dysfunction. It was found that forty-four percent (44%) of those surveyed believed there was not enough information in the literature in regards to the treatment of SMD. It is hoped that the current practice trends identified in this study will benefit practitioners who utilize SI principles to treat children with SMD.

Title: Survey of the Impacts of Psychosocial and Emotional Behaviors of Children with Cerebral Palsy during Therapy Sessions

Presented by: Amanda Canavan, OTS; Heather Pajak, OTS; Kara Kuncio, OTS; Sarah Stachowiak, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Dr. Lalit Shah

Research Committee Reader: Dr. Harvey Weintraub

Abstract: This study surveyed occupational therapists and speech and language pathologists to understand psychosocial and emotional behaviors of children with cerebral palsy (CP) impacting therapy sessions. A follow up interview was conducted with occupational therapists and speech and language pathologists who agreed to participate. Information was used to gain knowledge and contribute understanding of behaviors of children with CP. Through the returned surveys, psychosocial and emotional behaviors were found to have an influence during therapy sessions. There were clusters of behavioral manifestations in the survey to identify and recognize symptoms of specific co-existing psychiatric diagnoses. This study concluded that further evaluation would be necessary by a psychiatrist in order to make a definite diagnosis. Due to limited results, additional research is needed to examine further understanding of the influences of psychosocial and emotional behaviors of children with CP during therapy sessions.