



MISERICORDIA  
UNIVERSITY

# **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SCHOLARLY SYMPOSIUM 2019**

## **PELM Research Posters and Doctoral Students Capstone Presentations**



**SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2019**

**5:15 – 8:05 P.M.**

**SANDY AND MARLENE INSALACO HALL**

**ROOMS 216, 217, 218**



*Research is to see what everybody else has seen,  
and to think what nobody else has thought.*

— Albert Szent-Gyorgvi

*In meditation we research the field without time and space and activity,  
and yet produce a useful effect while conducting the research.*

— Maharshi Mahesh Yogi

*You have to do the research. If you don't know about something,  
then you ask the right people who do.*

— Spike Lee



## PROGRAM

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5:15 – 5:30	<b>Weekend and Weekday Program Class Photographs</b>
5:30 – 5:35	<b>Words from the College of Health Sciences and Education Dean</b> Dr. Leamor Kahanov
5:35 – 5:50	<b>Welcome</b> Dr. Lori Charney, Chair, Occupational Therapy Department  <b>Presentation of Pins</b> Occupational Therapy Faculty
5:50 – 5:55	<b>Research Presentation Opening Remarks</b> Dr. Lalit J. Shah, Professor and Research Coordinator, OT Department
5:55 – 6:00	<b>Doctoral Capstone Opening Remarks</b> Dr. Ellen McLaughlin, Director, Occupational Therapy Doctoral Program
6:00 – 8:00	<b>Open Hors-d'oeuvres Table</b> everyone eats and views/reviews posters at the same time
6:00 – 7:00	<b>Research Posters (6)</b>
7:00 – 8:00	<b>Research Posters (6)</b>
5:45 – 7:45	<b>Concurrent OTD Capstone Presentations</b>
8:00 – 8:05	<b>Final Wrap Up</b>



## **Research Posters- Session I: 6:00-7:00**

### **Poster # 1**

**Title:** The Effects of Mirror Therapy on Upper Extremity Paresis caused from Acute or Chronic Stroke

**Researchers:** Meghan Anglin, OTS; Caitlyn Deeter, OTS; Alexandra Koreivo, OTS; Jennifer Seiz, OTS; Brittany Snedeker, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Leamor Kahanov, Ed.D., ATC

**Reader:** Dr. Joseph Cipriani Ed. D.; OTR/L

**Abstract:**

**OBJECTIVE.** The study explores the frequency and perception of mirror therapy (MT) interventions by occupational therapy (OT) practitioners for improving upper extremity (UE) functioning after strokes.

**METHOD.** The study consisted of a survey which was used to gather data regarding practitioners' experience or perception of MT for strokes.

**RESULTS.** Sixty-five individuals completed the survey portion of this study. The majority of respondents (72.5%) reported experience with MT for stroke rehabilitation and 39.4% identified the intervention method as beneficial, sometimes. Of the respondents that do not implement MT for stroke patients (27.5%), 92.9% do not feel knowledgeable enough about MT to implement it. The data suggests that a knowledge gap between the research and implementing MT into clinical practice may exist.

**CONCLUSION.** MT is a beneficial intervention method to improve UE functioning when paired with purposeful activities. For practitioners who do not currently implement it into practice, education is desired.

### **Poster # 2**

**Title:** Perceptions of Campers on the Effectiveness of Farm Camp to Improve Coping Skills for Children Experiencing Grief from Trauma or Loss: Year 1 of a 5 Year Longitudinal Study

**Researchers:** Samantha Gregorowicz, OTS; Brianna Kubishin, OTS; Micaela Rhone, OTS & Brianna Rowe, OTS

**Researcher Committee Chair:** Jennifer Dessoie, OTD

**Reader:** Joseph Cipriani Ed.D., OTR/L.

**Abstract:** This research assesses the impact of a 5 day grief camp for children experiencing grief/trauma and was implemented at The Lands at Hillside Farms by Misericordia University Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Students. This research assesses the efficacy of this camp and its impact on a child's coping skills from the staff's perspective. The camp is designed to reduce anxiety, stress, anger, and fear, through the use of chores, coping skills education, crafts, and horticulture. The participants were 9 staff members ages 18+ consisting of staff and OT Fieldwork Students. It is the first of a 5 year mixed-method longitudinal study. Likert scales and an online survey were used to assess the staff's impression about the children's' coping skill development. The results indicated that the staff saw improvements in the children's coping skills and that aspects of being on a farm (the environment, the animals, and the activities) benefitted the children.

### **Poster # 3**

**Title:** Parent Perceptions Regarding the Impact of Organized Sports on Childhood Development

**Researchers:** Brittany Yerkes, OTS, Andrea Gibson, OTS, Christina Corrin, OTS, Ashley Emmons, OTS, Amy Stoddard, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Kristina Toussaint, MS, OTR/L

**Reader:** Dr. Ellen McLaughlin Ed. D, OTR/L., FAOTA

**Abstract:** Occupational therapists' value and promote play as a child's primary role within the community environment. Many children today are enrolled in organized sports and other activities. Data collected by other professions have noted the benefits of sports participation in children but have not addressed the impact of organized sports as part of childhood occupation. In today's society, does parent promotion of participation in organized sports positively or negatively impact development? This poster introduces the results of a study designed to gather parent perceptions regarding the positive and/or negative impact of their children's



participation or non-participation in organized sports on their development. Additionally, this study will explore the factors behind their decision to enroll or not enroll children in organized sports. This research is a starting point to gather knowledge and generate conversation regarding the role of occupational therapy in childhood organized sports.

#### **Poster # 4**

**Title:** A Best Practice Modification of the Cougar Home Safety Assessment

**Researchers:** Rebecca Burgess, OTS, Haley DiMassimo, OTS, Caroline Florenzo, OTS, Bailee Hymers, OTS, Kaitlynn Kuchta, OTS, Olivia Natale, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Grace Fisher, Ed.D., OTR/L

**Reader:** Kathy Hughes Butcher, MS, OTR/L

**Objective:** The purpose of this study was to develop a new version of the Cougar Home Safety Assessment 4.0 (CHSA 4.0) to assure it's criteria would be in keeping with home safety standards, technological advancements, and occupational therapist expectations.

**Method:** A total of 641 occupational therapy alumni from the Misericordia University Occupational Therapy Master of Science degree program were surveyed online to obtain feedback and recommendations concerning the appropriateness of the CHSA 4.0 criteria.

**Results:** All data from the 28 respondents were analyzed to determine needed changes. Revisions to 48 of the 78 items on the CHSA were made, resulting in the revised instrument. The new CHSA 5.0 also includes instructions noting the importance of therapist judgment when assessing the home.

**Conclusion:** It is recommended that occupational therapists consider use of the CHSA 5.0 due to it's important emphasis on environmental safety.

#### **Poster # 5**

**Title of the topic:** Effectiveness of Telehealth in Pediatric Occupational Therapy Practice - A Scoping Review

**Researchers:** Miranda Amey, OTS, Kathryn Canavan, OTS, Michael Castaldi, OTS, Taylor Daton, OTS, Alisa Guzman, OTS, Olivia Powers, OTS

**Research Chair:** Christine German, OTD, OTR/L, ATP

**Reader:** Dr. Joseph Cipriani, Ed.D., OTR/L

**Abstract:**

In our increasingly digital world, technology has entered nearly all aspects of everyday life. Occupational therapy has attempted to adapt, and taken advantage of, these advances and an emerging model of practice, teletherapy, is being increasingly utilized. This scoping review of the literature was undertaken to explore existing current research on the effectiveness of occupational therapy using a telehealth approach for pediatric practice, summarize findings, and identify gaps in the literature.

#### **Poster # 6**

**Title:** A Qualitative Study of WFOT-Approved Curricula and their Address of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

**Researchers:** Jamie Fechnay, OTS; Meghan Maccarone, OTS; Alyssa Parker, OTS; Allison Parkes, OTS; Sarah Roettger, OTS; and Jessica Thomson, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Dawn Evans OTD, OTR/L

**Reader:** Dr. Orley Templeton OTD, OTR/L

**Abstract:**

In 2018, there were 800,000 documented deaths by suicide worldwide (World Health Organization, 2018). The dramatic increase in suicides across the lifespan has supported the need for prevention education from laypersons in the community to professionals in all healthcare disciplines. A qualitative study was formed to explore the current educational opportunities related to suicide prevention and mental health that are available to occupational therapy (OT) students worldwide within World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT) accredited programs. This education will assist future OTs to more effectively identify and treat patients who may be at risk for suicide. In total, 591 WFOT accredited universities were given a 15 question survey regarding information



about student and faculty awareness, knowledge, and experience with mental health and suicide prevention. From the 43 responses received, the four common themes established were lack of education, time spent, opinion on preparedness, and training for suicide prevention.

### **Doctoral Capstone Presentations**

**5:45-6:15:** Deanne Vasely “Applying AOTA Specialty Certification in School Systems (SCSS) to Individual Professional and Programmatic Goals”

**6:15-6:45:** Noelle Welch “Visually Enhanced Occupational Therapy: Education, Intervention, and Advocacy”

**6:45-7:15:** Pasqualina Tirro “Coffee Social Group”

### **Research Posters- Session II: 7:00-8:00**

#### **Poster # 1**

**Title:** Acute Care Hospitalization and its Effect on the Occupation of Sleep

**Researchers:** Jennifer Hart, OTS; Melissa Schlosser, OTS; Ian Wallace, OTS; Kimberly Wallace, OTS; Susan Widener, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Cheryl Jayne, OTD, OTR/L

**Reader:** Dr. Grace Fisher Ed.D., OTR/L

**Abstract:**

This study examined what factors contributed to normal versus negative sleeping patterns during acute care hospitalization while determining the area of sleep most greatly impacted. Students, faculty, and employees of Misericordia University were invited to engage in an online questionnaire using Survey Monkey. The data was collected from 112 respondents and questions were designed to address all areas of sleep according to American Occupational Therapy Association Practice Framework (2014) of rest, sleep preparation, and sleep participation. The percentages of those who could not engage in activities associated with the concepts of rest, sleep preparation, and sleep participation while in the hospital were 65%, 45%, and 37% respectively. The study thus shows rest as being the greatest area of sleep impacted during hospitalization. Identifying interruptions during an acute care stay and how they affect the occupation of sleep allows OTs to facilitate changes that can be utilized during practice.

#### **Poster # 2**

**Title:** Collegiate Athletes’ Perception of the Impact of Concussions in Meaningful Occupations

**Researchers:** Brianna Bogacki OTS, Melissa Dumansky OTS, Casey Friedman OTS, Diana Gomez OTS, Susan Luka OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Leamor Kahanov, Ed. D., ATC

**Reader:** Dr. Lalit J. Shah Ed. D, OTR/L

**Abstract:** Current research is lacking to identify athletes’ participation in occupations post-concussion. The purpose of the current research study is to delineate the perceived impact of concussions by student-athletes on daily occupations. The study implemented an electronic survey to assess perceived impact of concussion on occupations, with a specific focus on collegiate athletes and their ability to re-engage in their daily activities after a concussion diagnosis. Post-concussion symptoms such as headache, dizziness, and confusion were identified as impacting a collegiate athlete beyond academics and sports and into occupations. Collegiate athletes may be experiencing difficulties with completion of meaningful occupations as well as difficulty in sport leading to OT’s being a vital part of the initial post-concussion team. Data supports the design and implementation of an effective rehabilitation program for post-concussion patients engaging in daily occupations and may identify the need for additional health care personnel such as occupational therapists in the treatment of concussions.



### **Poster # 3**

**Title:** A Study of Student and Therapist Geriatric Occupational Therapy Practice Perceptions

**Researchers:** Mariah Bostwick, OTS; Natasha Chandra, OTS; Ashley Coleman, OTS; Hannah Corbacio, OTS; Emily Mesaris, OTS; Jessica Pluta, OTS; & Kaitlin Wilson, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Grace Fisher, Ed.D., OTR/L

**Reader:** Kathy Hughes Butcher, MS, OTR/L

**Objective:** The objectives were to review the literature to determine current issues affecting geriatric occupational therapy (OT) practice, identify perceptions of OT students and clinicians, and recommend ongoing professional development.

**Methods:** The study used a qualitative descriptive research design. Data were collected between March and July of 2018 from OT students and therapists via interviews.

**Results:** Common perceptions of therapists regarding geriatric OT include areas of practice, satisfaction and enjoyment, difficulties, client goals, theories and frames of references, continuing education and evidence-based practice, advice to students and practitioners, and desired changes. Student interviews included perceptions of geriatric practice and models and interventions used.

**Conclusion:** This research study found that there is a need for expansion of OT's role in geriatric practice, research on productivity related to quality of care, and advancement in education. This study and future studies may help improve quality of care and occupational therapists' job satisfaction.

### **Poster # 4**

**Title:** Perceptions of Campers on the Effectiveness of Farm Camp to Improve Coping Skills for Children Experiencing Grief from Trauma or Loss: Year 1 of a 5 Year Longitudinal Study

**Researchers:** Julianne Cariola, OTS; Brianne Font, OTS; Brianna Membrino, OTS; Emily Walsh, OTS

**Researcher Committee Chair:** Dr. Jennifer Dessoye, OTD, OTR/L

**Reader:** Dr. Joseph Cipriani Ed. D., OTR/L

#### **Abstract:**

This research assesses the impact of a five day long farm camp on children experiencing grief and trauma. Implemented by Misericordia University Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Students, the goal is to assess the efficacy of The Lands at Hillside Farms Grief Camp and its impact on a child's coping skills. The camp is designed to reduce anxiety, stress, anger, fear through the use of chores, coping skills education, crafts, and horticulture. This mixed method longitudinal study consists of 11 children ages 6 through 14 who experienced grief and trauma. It is the first of a five year long study. Surveys and interviews were used to assess campers coping skill development. Campers expressed benefits of the grief camp as fostering coping skills to aid in the healing process. By understanding how to better treat these children, occupational therapy practitioners can provide effective interventions to improve the quality of life of these children.

### **Poster # 5**

**Title:** The Effectiveness of Body Mechanics Intervention in Occupational Therapy

**Researchers:** Megan Brownmiller, OTS, Abigail Kayes, OTS, Molly Noon, OTS, Sarah Novalsky, OTS, Alexa Plitt, OTS, Rebecca Price, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Cheryl Jayne OTD, OTR/L

**Reader:** Dr. Grace Fisher Ed.D., OTR/L

#### **Abstract:**

**Objective:** To discuss the components of an already existing body mechanics program and determine the patient's perspectives of elements that were successful and unsuccessful.

**Method:** A qualitative method was utilized to determine participants' perceptions of body mechanics programs at an outpatient clinic. A survey created by the researchers, including fixed responses and open-ended questions, was distributed to participants via email.

**Participants:** Thirty-seven participants between the ages of 18-65 discharged from an occupational therapy body mechanics program and physical therapy services for low back pain received the survey.



**Results:** Five participants responded to the survey stating that many aspects of the body mechanics program were helpful and positively affected their pain and quality of life.

**Discussion:** The researchers concluded that the combination of repetitive movement training and simulation within occupational context, education based intervention, client-centered individualized intervention plan, and supportive therapeutic staff enhanced the effectiveness and success of body mechanics intervention.

**Poster # 6**

**Title:** Effectiveness of Animal Assisted Therapy to Reduce Stress in College Students

**Researchers:** Megan Breen, OTS; Austin Martinelli, OTS; Nicole Mayerski, OTS; Leanne Para, OTS; Christopher Rehrig, OTS

**Research Chair:** Dr. Jennifer Dessoye, OTD, OTR/L, CLA

**Reader:** Dr. Dawn Evans, OTD, OTR/L

**Abstract:**

**Objective**

The objective of this study was to determine whether or not taking part in animal-assisted therapy (AAT) was a viable method for lowering stress levels in college students.

**Methods**

The study was a two-tailed t-test using a Likert scale through questionnaires about stress levels and stress management. Quantitative data was taken through pulse, blood oxygen, and blood pressure readings.

**Results**

Stress levels, stress management, and systolic/diastolic blood pressure of participants showed a statistically significant change from pretest to posttest. Pulse rate showed a result approaching statistical significance.

**Conclusion**

The study has concluded that the presence of a certified therapy dog created a comforting environment which positively impacted college students' stress levels.

**Doctoral Capstone Presentations**

**7:15-7:45:** Nicole Schwartz “Stress Reduction Group for Caregivers of People with ADRD”

**8:00 – 8:05**

**Closing Remarks – Dr. Shah**



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