

Intraprofessional Educational Activities Implemented by OT Programs in the United States

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PURPOSE: In the field of occupational therapy (OT), effective intraprofessional collaboration increases the quality of patient care while also reducing costs for patients and healthcare systems (Nardella et al., 2018). In order for occupational therapy education programs to meet Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) standards, programs must incorporate opportunity for intraprofessional collaboration into their curriculum. But according to a previous unpublished survey, only 68% of OT programs in the U.S. include intraprofessional activities (Qualls, 2019). The purpose of this survey is to collect updated information regarding the prevalence and type of intraprofessional interactions available to OT/occupational therapy assistant (OTA) students throughout educational programs in the U.S.

DESIGN: We collected data using a Web-based survey sent via email to all OT and OTA programs in the United States. Responses were obtained from a questionnaire using the software Qualtrics XM Platform (Version 2021). The questionnaire included seven multiple choice questions and one open ended question. All survey information collected was anonymous.

METHOD: OT and OTA Programs in the U.S. were contacted via email to complete an anonymous survey discussing intraprofessional collaboration within curricula. Surveys were distributed using the Qualtrics XM Platform (Version 2021) and were estimated to take less than one minute to complete. Responses were checked for data entry errors and incomplete surveys, then analyzed using measures of frequency, measures of variability, and measures of central tendency. This survey was determined by the Augusta University Institutional Review Board to be not human subjects research.

RESULTS: We received 183 total responses out of 529 surveys sent to OT/OTA programs who had students in their program at the time of the survey. The returned questionnaires revealed that only 79% of OT educational programs included intraprofessional collaboration in their curriculum, despite ACOTE 2018 standards (Nardella et al., 2018). Only 66% of OT/OTA programs had an intraprofessional (OT/OTA) program within 30 miles of their school, revealing that many OT/OTA programs are isolated from each other. Additionally, we found the majority of intraprofessional activities, 51%, are less than one week in length, and 43% of intraprofessional activities were implemented using a case study format.

IMPACT STATEMENT: This survey offers insight into the number of OT and OTA educational programs in the U.S. that provide opportunity for intraprofessional collaboration. This information is important as it reveals 21% of OT/OTA programs need to add intraprofessional activities to their curriculum.

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