

Life Balance, Stress, & Occupational Burnout in OTA Students: An Exploratory Study

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The healthcare worker burnout crisis in the United States (U.S.) necessitates urgent attention. College is a critical time to help occupational therapy assistant students understand the relationship between life balance, stress, and burnout as they transition into the workforce. However, little is known about occupational therapy assistant students' life balance, burnout, and stress. This session presents the results of a cross-sectional study that investigated the relationship between life balance, stress, and burnout among occupational therapy assistant (OTA) students. The results from 200 e-survey responses revealed that U.S. OTA students experience an unbalanced life, with significant negative correlations between reported life balance and perceived stress and occupational burnout. Notably, a positive correlation was found between perceived stress and burnout. OTA students identified exercise, sleep, and completing assignments as activities that buffer their life balance while lingering outside homework, lack of sleep, and limited relaxation time were perceived as harmful. These findings emphasize the importance of addressing life balance and implementing strategies to mitigate stress and burnout among OTA students. By integrating targeted support programs, occupational therapy assistants can enhance their professional well-being and future success. This study highlights the need for continued research in developing interventions that specifically address the unique challenges OTA students face in achieving a balanced lifestyle.

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