

Introduction

Understanding and using evidence in practice improves health care delivery (Lugtenberg, Burgers, & Westert, 2009), reduces errors, and increases professional identity. Despite the call for increased use of evidence in occupational therapy decision making and positive attitudes of therapists toward use of evidence in practice), evidence based practice (EBP) is perceived by clinicians as time consuming and difficult due to lack of knowledge and/or resources (Humphries, et al, 2000; Bennett et al, 2003).

Occupational therapists surveyed agree

- Evidence based practice is important to our profession
- Evidence is useful in practice
- Using evidence will improve patient outcomes

Bennett et al., 2003 Hasselkus, 1999; Heiwe et al., 2011; Holm, 2000; Law, 2002; Law, Baum & Dunn, 2005; Tickle-Degnen, 1999

Evidence Based Practice

Involves using current best evidence to assist with making clinical decisions about the care of an individual by integrating research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values. (Sackett et al, 2000)

Steps to EBP Process

1. Formulate the Question
2. Search efficiently for the best available evidence
3. Critically appraise the evidence
4. Integrate appraisal with clinical expertise and client preference
5. Evaluate performance and outcomes



Fieldwork Experience: Real world opportunities

Today's FW students recognize the value of using evidence in practice. They learn and practice how to write questions, search evidence, and appraise evidence in their curriculums and translate these skill in the clinical setting.

Sample **ACOTE Standards** reinforced in FW:

- B.8.1.** Articulate the importance of research, scholarly activities, and the continued development of a body of knowledge relevant to the profession of occupational therapy.
- B.8.2** Effectively locate, understand, and evaluate information, including the quality of research evidence
- B.8.3** Use research literature to make evidence-based decisions

Fieldwork is an opportunity for students to practice integrating evidence into practice. In Fieldwork students:

- apply and build skills learned in academic settings
- Use scientific evidence and critical analysis in their intervention planning
- establish new routines and priorities around evidence in practice
- share knowledge, strategies and resources with supervisors and team
- Develop confidence and experience professional growth

Hanson, 2013; Stube & Jedicka, 2007

EBP in practice

Value of using evidence in clinical practice

- Supports communication with other professionals
- Demonstrates effectiveness of services
- May increase referrals to occupational therapy
- Provides a measure of accountability
- Supports continued reimbursement
- Encourages translation of knowledge from research to clinic.
- Supports critical reflection on your practice
- Supports clinical decisions
- Provides optimal services "best practice" to our clients

Challenges to making EBP part of everyday practice

- Translating knowledge from research environments to practice is challenging
- Researching evidence may not be practical for all patients/clients
- Clinicians' skills re: developing questions, searching and appraising evidence vary
- Concern that EBP impacts professionalism
- Doubts that incorporating evidence could reduce holistic, patient-centered care
- Lack of higher order evidence in occupational therapy
- Lack of organizational or managerial support
- Lack of time
- Inadequate resources

Bennet et al., 2011; Burke & Gitlin, 2012; Dorette. Rozich & Viau, 2009; Heiwe et al, 2011; Ilott, 2012; Metzler & Metz, 2010

Fieldwork Students: Change Agents of the new millennium

Make it happen

STRATEGIES FOR CLINICAL FW EDUCATORS:

- Set-up an in-service, led by the FW student, to discuss the value and steps involved in evidence-based practice
- Identify an area of unmet need &/or practice interest in your dept. that the FW student can research and present
- Plan a "lunch & learn" allowing student to share a case study exemplifying EBP
- Formally & informally 'keep the Evidence dialogue going' with the FW student. Show interest and investment in EBP principles.

STRATEGIES FOR THE FIELDWORK STUDENT:

- Choose a client or clinical dilemma and formulate an answerable question using the PICO format (Patient/problem, Intervention, Comparison, Outcomes). Identify your source of evidence and conduct a literature search. Share your findings
- Share your ways of searching the literature with FW staff. Take advantage of your access to university databases & other resources.
- Model the EBP principles in your treatment setting.
- Communicate with patients/families/ clinical team current evidence-based interventions and assessments that benefit clients.