

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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Project title	International research engagement of occupational therapists
Project summary	<p>Research is an important cornerstone of any health profession. This project will investigate the research engagement of occupational therapists internationally. Occupationally therapy is governed by a world organisation - the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT). WFOT has 111 member country organisations that represent the interests of occupational therapists within each country. This project has been developed by an advisory group consisting of 14 occupational therapy WFOT delegates from Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America and Australia, and a survey has been produced in English and translated into the 18 highest numbers of languages in WFOT member organisations. The survey will explore all aspects of research engagement and will be distributed using Qualtrics through the WFOT member organisations via an online link. Analysis will use descriptive statistics and explore significant relationships. Outcomes will include informing strategies for WFOT to support occupational therapists to engage in research.</p>

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Project details

Ethics reference number	2024/HE001436
Version and date	Version 1, Date 2024
Chief Investigator	Professor Lynette Mackenzie
Department/School	Discipline of Occupational Therapy, School of Health Sciences
Student researcher	None
Project team	<p>Dr. Vera Kaelin, Umea University, Sweden</p> <p>Dr Hadeel Bakhsh, Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University, Saudi Arabia</p> <p>Dr Annika Lexen, Lund University, Sweden</p> <p>Ms Amber Chang, Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital, Taiwan</p> <p>Ms Elizabete Roldao, President of Portuguese Association of Occupational Therapists</p> <p>Ms Ina Roosen, Hsg Bochum, Hochschule für Gesundheit, Germany</p> <p>A/Prof Medhi Rassafiani, Charles Sturt University, Port Macquarie</p> <p>Mr. Patrick Hynes, University of Limerick, Ireland</p> <p>Dr. Peter Ndaa, University of Ghana</p> <p>A/Prof Virginia Stoffel, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, USA</p> <p>Mr. Turikumana Pierre Damien, University of Rwanda</p> <p>Ms. Epiphany Murebwayire, Department of Occupational Therapy, Rwanda Military Hospital, Kigali, Rwanda</p> <p>Dr. Agostina Ciampa, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina</p> <p>Ms Marinela Rata, Universitatea Vasile Alecsandri din Bacău, Romania</p>

1.2 Research sites and collaborations

This survey will be open to all occupational therapists who are members of their WFOT country member organisation. There are 111 member organisations of WFOT as listed on the WFOT website: <https://wfot.org/membership/organisational-membership/list-of-wfot-member-organisations>. Prof Mackenzie is the Director of Research for WFOT, has links with each of the member organisations, and has the support of the WFOT CEO to conduct this study. We will invite each member organisation to distribute the online link for the survey to their individual members. Participants will be offered a choice of an English version of the survey and for selected languages a choice of a local language option (Spanish, French, Portuguese, Polish, Greek, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Thai, Persian, Arabic, Malay, Korean, Japanese, Traditional and simplified Chinese). Draft translations were done through Google translate, and WFOT representatives from each language group reviewed these and revised them where necessary.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Rationale

As with any health profession, occupational therapy needs to practice in an evidence-based way to offer the best interventions for clients with effective outcomes. Research is the basis for the development of evidence-based practice, and it is important that all occupational therapists are engaged in research even if only as a consumer of the research base. WFOT is concerned with the promotion of research for the profession across all of its member organisations. The nature of research undertaken will vary considerably from country to country and the access that individual occupational therapists have to resources to enable them to engage in research will also be diverse. A previous internal enquiry was conducted at the member organisation level and 35 organisations responded giving a higher-level overview of how they perceived research engagement to be operationalised within their country. This only took place in English so there could have been several issues not included in the results. What is missing is an estimate of how individual occupational therapists are engaging with research, which would give the profession much more accurate information about what potential supports are needed and by whom. This will provide WFOT with some data upon which to plan future projects to support international occupational therapy research.

2.2 Research aims and questions

The aims of this project are to:

1. Identify the levels of research engagement undertaken by individual occupational therapists internationally
2. Use the results of the Edmonton Research Orientation Survey (EROS) to compare occupational therapy with other health professional groups who have used this survey in published research
3. Compare results for high, medium and low-income countries
4. Identify what individual occupational therapists feel they need access to in order to engage in research.

3. PROJECT DESIGN

3.1 Research plan

We anticipate that the project will take approximately six months to gather the data using the survey, and a further three months to conduct data analysis.

The project advisory group consisting of the international project investigators have collaborated to formulate an online survey on the Qualtrics platform and have piloted the survey to capture information about individual occupational therapist's research engagement. The survey has been designed to accommodate a wide range of international contexts and research education and systems. We anticipate that the survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete.

All occupational therapists who are members of their WFOT country member organisation will be invited to participate, and we will send the links to the survey to the management of these member organisations to distribute to their members.

Data will be downloaded to SPSS and data analysis will involve descriptive statistics and investigation of differences between groups within the data.

3.2 Participants

This survey will be open to all occupational therapists who are members of their WFOT country member organisation, and no screening will be required.

Participants will decide if they wish to complete the survey or not. The member organisation for each country will initially approach potential participants to undertake the survey by forwarding on the link to the on-line survey. Participants will be approached via email. The survey link will remain open for two months.

3.3 Informed consent

Consent will be obtained at the beginning of the survey where potential participants will be asked if they consent to participating in the survey and will be able to access the rest of the survey if they agree. The participation information statement will be embedded in the survey tool and participants will need to indicate they have read this before progressing to the survey, so they can give informed consent. As this is an anonymous cross-sectional survey there will be no opportunity to renegotiate or withdraw consent once the survey has been submitted as we will not be able to identify who submitted the survey. There are no consequences of non-consent as we will not know who has consented or who hasn't. No reimbursement for participation will be offered.

3.4 Participant activities

Consenting participants will complete and submit the online survey, which we estimate will take 10-15 minutes to complete. Participants will complete the survey online wherever is convenient to them.

3.5 Data collection and use

We will only be using the data collected using the online survey for this project. Data will be self-reported by participants in relation to their demographic background, their research engagement levels, their research experience, research barriers and facilitators and any assistance they require to engage in research.

4. RISKS & BENEFITS

4.1 Identified risks

As this project is focused on the views of professional occupational therapists we do not anticipate any risks of harm for participants when completing the survey.

4.2 Anticipated benefits

There will be no direct individual benefits to participants from completing the survey, however, the results will provide very valuable information for the international occupational therapy profession enabling the identification of strategies to improve research engagement, if needed.

5. OUTCOMES AND FUTURE PLANS

5.1 Feedback to participants

As the survey is anonymous, we will be unable to provide individual feedback to participants, however, we will disseminate results through the WFOT newsletter/s which are distributed online to all member organisations.

5.2 Dissemination of outcomes

We will intend to submit the findings for publication and present the findings at an international occupational therapy conference. The authors will include the research team with acknowledgments to the WFOT member organisations who assisted in translating and distributing the survey.

5.3 Other future uses

The data will not be used for other purposes.

6. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

6.1 Approvals

We have the support of WFOT to conduct this study.

6.2 Research data management plan

A Research Data Management Plan (RDMP) has been submitted and approved.

Research Data Management Plan:

- Classification is protected.
- Data is being generated from the Qualtrics platform and being downloaded into SPSS
- Data will be stored on the One Drive secure platform used by the Chief Investigator only and will be stored here after the project has been completed.
- The data will be stored for a minimum of 7 years and will be destroyed after this time.

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