Preparing New Zealand new graduate occupational therapists for practice: Are we doing enough?

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Aim

To determine new graduate occupational therapists’ preparedness for practice based on the OTBNZ competencies for registration in New Zealand

Implementation of Occupational Therapy
Communication
Culturally Safe Practice
Safe, Ethical and Legal Practice
Management of Self and People
Management of Environment and Resources
Continuing Professional Development

2012 NZAOT Conference, Hamilton
Methods

- Literature Review
- Online Survey
  • 454 responses (16.7%)
- Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Focus Group Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Auckland 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Auckland 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Palmerston North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nelson</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Dunedin</td>
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Key Findings

The majority of study participants rated the preparedness for practice of New Zealand new graduate occupational therapists as:

7/10

1 = least prepared  
10 = comprehensively prepared
Themes

1. Preparation for OTBNZ Competencies
2. Different Places: Different Preparation
3. Preparation for the Changing Face of Healthcare
4. Preparation beyond Current Undergraduate Education
5. Preparation Influenced by Experience and Attitudes
Key Findings

Preparation for OTBNZ Competencies:

Strengths

Weaknesses

Continuing Professional Development

“I think they’re pretty good at looking at what learning needs to happen. You know identifying their professional development, how they can improve, what assessments they can learn that would be relevant to their field” (Auckland 2)
Key Findings

Preparation for OTBNZ Competencies:

Strengths
- Communication
- Continuing Professional Development

Weaknesses

“In general they’re quite well prepared communication wise, that’s what I’m always well impressed with... they’ve got good communication skills, got good empathy” (Nelson)
Key Findings

Preparation for OTBNZ Competencies:

Strengths

- Communication
- Continuing Professional Development

Weaknesses

- Implementation of Occupational Therapy

“You’re expected as a new grad to be able to find those resources and get that person home safely... Yet you don’t even know what you don’t know” (Palmerston North)
**Key Findings**

**Preparation for OTBNZ Competencies:**

**Strengths**
- Communication
- Continuing Professional Development

**Weaknesses**
- Implementation of Occupational Therapy
- Management of Environment & Resources

“...I’d probably put implementation of occupational therapy as maybe not the strongest one too because again people can be really good at trying to assess things and figure out what needs to happen and all the rest of it but then thinking I’ve got to do it now and it’s that doing of the stuff... So that one there can be difficult” (Dunedin)
Key Findings

Preparation for OTBNZ Competencies:

- Culturally Safe Practice
- Safe, Ethical and Legal Practice
- Management of Self and People

“I don’t think they’ve got the culturally safe practice sorted but that’s not a unique problem to occupational therapy and part of that is not knowing what to do as a profession, not knowing what to do as an individual” (Dunedin)

“Most new grads are actually very good reflectors” (Nelson)
Recommendations

- **Educational Institution Level**
  - Identify the emerging fields of practice,
  - Actively monitor the OTBNZ competencies, explicitly showing them within current programmes

- **Organisational (OTBNZ Level)**
  - Review pre-registration education timeframes
  - Work with NZAOT to develop a new-graduate supervisors training package
  - Consider adopting OT Australia definition of entry-level
  - Ongoing review of preparedness for practice of new graduate therapists
Acknowledgements

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The Report

• Located on the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand website: www.otboard.org.nz