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Occupational Therapy's Role in Pain Management Within the Chiropractic Setting

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Occupational Therapy's Role in Pain Management Within the Chiropractic Setting

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Dr. Dustin Huffman at Huffman Chiropractic
Dr. Christina Kane, EdD, OTR/L

Introduction

This Capstone Project sought to explore and identify occupational disruption along with occupational therapy's (OTs) role within a chiropractic setting that is treating patients with acute and chronic musculoskeletal pain. The Survey of Occupational Disruption (SOD) and The Modified Barthel Index were two measures used to identify if and where occupational disruption occurred within Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL). Results from this needs assessment revealed three prominent areas of IADL disruption (hobbies, exercise, and sleep). OT's role, process, and referral path were identified along with educational material for what pain is as well as helpful handouts for the most disrupted IADL areas.

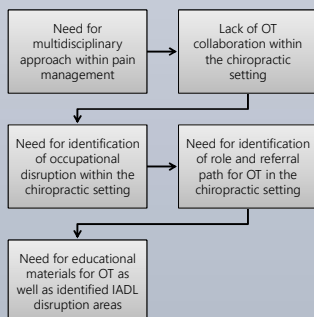


Figure 1. Recruitment flyer used to complete the needs assessment

Site Description

- Huffman Chiropractic is a privately owned practice under the ownership of Dr. Dustin Huffman, D.C.
- The practice is located within Horizon Integrative Medicine which is a holistic acupuncture and integrative wellness center owned and operated by Dr. Esteban Ortega, DACM acupuncture physician.

Needs Assessment



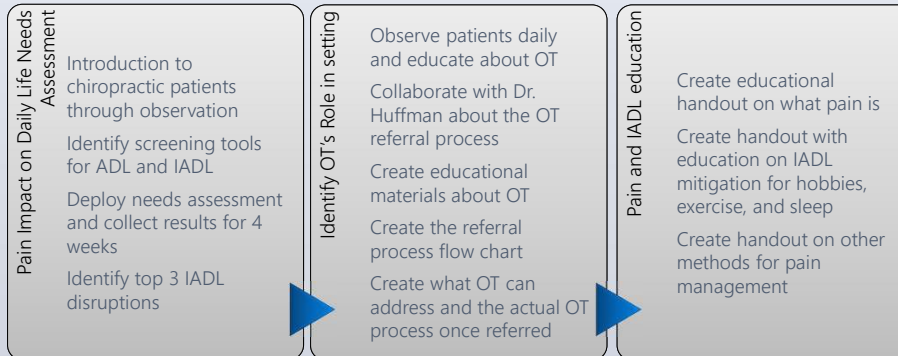
Literature Review Summary

- With 1 in 5 adults reporting, they have chronic pain affecting productivity and contributing to high health care costs, pain is fast becoming one of today's largest public health crisis (Dahlmer et al., 2016; Zelaya et al., 2020).
- The chiropractic profession purports itself as being concerned with diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disorders of the neurological and musculoskeletal systems as well as the effects of these disorders on general health (National Board of Chiropractic Examiners [NBCE], 2020).
- The biopsychosocial model, utilized by both OT and chiropractors, is noted as the most cost-effective interdisciplinary pain management program when treating patients with acute and chronic pain (Gatchel and Howard, 2021).
- OTs contribution to chronic pain management involves a top-down approach utilizing pain education, functional restoration, physical agent modalities, and therapeutic exercises (Snodgrass, 2011).



Figure 2. Biopsychosocial model (Gleedt et al., 2017)

Capstone Project Description



Pain Impact on Daily Occupations 2023

Needs Assessment Results

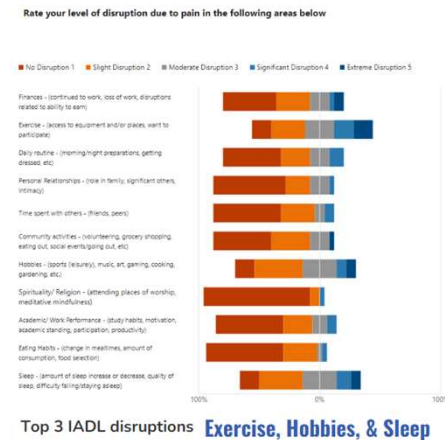
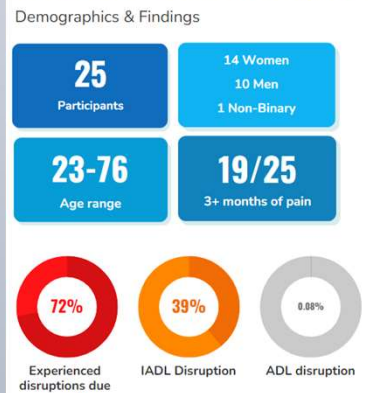


Figure 3. Pain impact on daily occupations needs assessment results

Learning Objectives Achieved

- Identified the role of occupational therapy within the chiropractic setting.
- Established and implemented a screening tool identifying occupational performance disruption for 4 weeks, yielding positive results of IADL disruptions.
- Created educational materials of what OT is, what the referral pathway from chiropractic to OT would be, what the OT process would be for pain patients, and what OTs are able to address within this setting and population.
- Created educational materials on what pain is as well as materials related to the top 3 IADL disruptions and other methods to help with pain management.
- Obtained certification in the administration of Physical Agent Modalities (PAMs).

Leisure/Hobbies

Engaging in activities that are intrinsically motivated and are enjoyed during discretionary time with or without social interactions. **CAN** and **PROUD** will take place most after experiencing pain.

Steps that can be taken in order to prepare for these activities include:

- Keeping a pain diary and noting the activity, duration, and pain level experienced throughout the day
- Planning for activities that you enjoy engaging in
- Gathering all of the items needed prior to engaging
- Scheduling in rest breaks (spacing)
- Including adaptive equipment to perform the activity

Exercise

Reading patient pain is complex. It can be hard to find the right combination of therapies to help you feel your best. Therapies are complex, but pain medication only relieves pain by about 30% on average. Therefore, including multiple treatment approaches in your routine can help you feel as much better as possible. The options you consider to help relieve your pain is **wise**.

Regular exercise can reduce pain by taking your sensitive nerves. Exercise has other benefits too. Exercise can:

- Reduce sensitivity and fatigue
- Improve strength
- Improve sleep
- Reduce stress, anxiety, and depression
- Improve mood

Sleep

The suggested amount of sleep based on age according to the Center for Disease Control & Prevention is 7-9 hours for 13-18 year olds, 7-9 hours for 19-25 year olds, and 7-8 hours for 26-30 year olds. According to the CDC, as outlined in the Occupational Disruption Survey, 19/25 participants reported sleep disruption. The pain diary form included a section related to obtaining information and what the patient's health, active engagement in other occupation?

There are three main aspects involved with the occupation of sleep that OTs can address:

- 1. Bed:** Reducing the discomfort in using physical, mental, or social activities, resulting in a relaxed state
- 2. Sleep Preparation:** Engaging in activities that promote a comfortable environment, such as lighting, airflow, temperature, clean, quiet environment, regularity of sleep, and light/sound
- 3. Sleep Participation:** Encouraging sleep state without interruptions, creating activities contributing sleep, reducing/relieving, social

Figure 3. Examples of education created for the top 3 IADLs disrupted

Implications for OT Practice

- This project needs assessment will shine a light on the occupational disruptions experienced by patients undergoing chiropractic care who are experiencing pain.
- This project yields the potential to educate patients on what the OT profession is, its role within pain management, and to strengthen the relationship amongst chiropractic and OT care hopefully increasing overall quality of life.
- Opportunity to expand and build on the results found in this project within an emerging practice area.

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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