

Building capacity for knowledge translation in occupational therapy

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Introduction: Knowledge translation (KT) is a systematic and iterative approach to help implement research in clinical practice, in order to improve health care. It is a complex process involving change in attitudes, systems and behaviours. The Princess Alexandra Hospital Occupational Therapy Department (PAHOT) have made substantial efforts to locate, appraise and implement research evidence into their clinical practice, however attitudinal, knowledge and resource barriers remain. Despite its importance, very little research exists about organisational initiatives designed to build KT capacity and close research-practice gaps.

Objectives: To evaluate organisational initiatives for KT to facilitate closure of research-practice gaps in core clinical practices across a whole occupational therapy department.

Method: This study used a Participatory Action Research (PAR) design focused on KT activities. A range of strategies were used to target identified barriers to KT, including training in KT, mentoring, leadership and organisational strategies. Fifty occupational therapists completed a pre-post questionnaire based on the Theoretical Domains Framework.

Results: The baseline questionnaire found participants had positive attitudes towards KT, however 26% were not confident in their ability to identify research-practice gaps and 46% were unaware of strategies to support KT. Perceived barriers to KT included lack of time and knowledge for KT activities, and perceived lack of rigorous research evidence in specific areas of practice. Results of change over time will be presented.

Conclusion: A multifaceted organisational initiative may support KT by enhancing the knowledge, skills and reported behaviours of occupational therapists, ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes.

Contribution to practice: We report results from a strategy to develop, implement and evaluate an initiative to build capacity for KT. Findings will assist management to implement organisational initiatives to support KT.