

Emerging Experts : Occupational Therapists in the Evolving Field of Pediatric Oncology



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BACKGROUND.

- Pediatric oncology survivorship rates rising
- Shift to QoL and functional outcomes throughout cancer continuum
- OT is key
- Goal : Assess involvement of OTs in pediatric oncology rehabilitation

METHODS.

- Mixed-methods explanatory sequential design :
 - 1.Survey 
 - 2.Focus group (Discussion with rehabilitation professionals in the field)

RESULTS.



- 217 health professionals
- 21 OTs (9.6%)

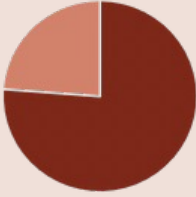


 OTs from 7 countries

RESULTS. (CONT.)

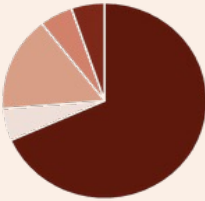


Speciality of participants



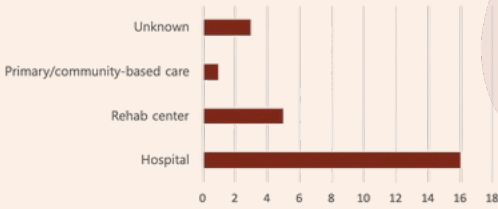
■ Identified themselves as pediatric oncology specialists
■ Did not deem themselves pediatric oncology specialists

Primary role of participants

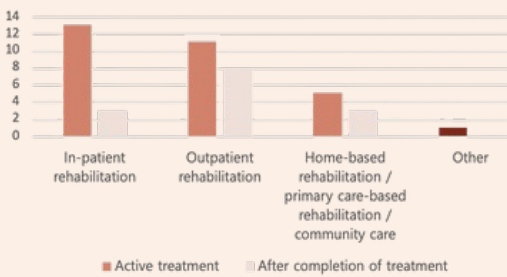


■ Clinical ■ Research ■ Academia ■ Mixed ■ Other ■ Unknown

Place of clinical work



Types of therapies offered



- 2 (9.5%) indicated rehabilitation is well established after treatment
- 13 (61.9%) identified possibility of specialization in pediatric oncology
- 8 (38.1%) identified availability of training opportunities

• Research gaps :

- Effectiveness of OT intervention
- Survivorship and palliative care

Clinical gaps :

- OTs in multidisciplinary teams
- Training opportunities
- Clear guidelines and structured programs

- 28.6% used guidelines (n=6)
- 3 (14.3%) indicated rehabilitation well established during treatment

RESULTS.

(CONT.)



- 27 participants, 2 were OTs (7.4%)
- Themes emerged :
 - Need for capacity building
 - Interprofessional collaboration
 - Advocacy and recognition of benefits of services
 - Context differences

Goal is :

returning back to the idea

“ of normal human society, participating in life

(OT, North America)

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“This is a really unique population and these families are [...] letting us work with their children in their most vulnerable time of life. We're asking them to do hard things [...] when they're dealing with all these treatments and a life-threatening disease.

I think just the opportunity and the gift of families letting us be present in that space is what [being a rehabilitation professional in pediatric oncology] means to me.

(OT, North America)

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CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

- OT in pediatric oncology is underdeveloped and underutilized
- Need to advance role and improve services
- Clinical and research gaps to address



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