

Impact of OTA on the US Health System

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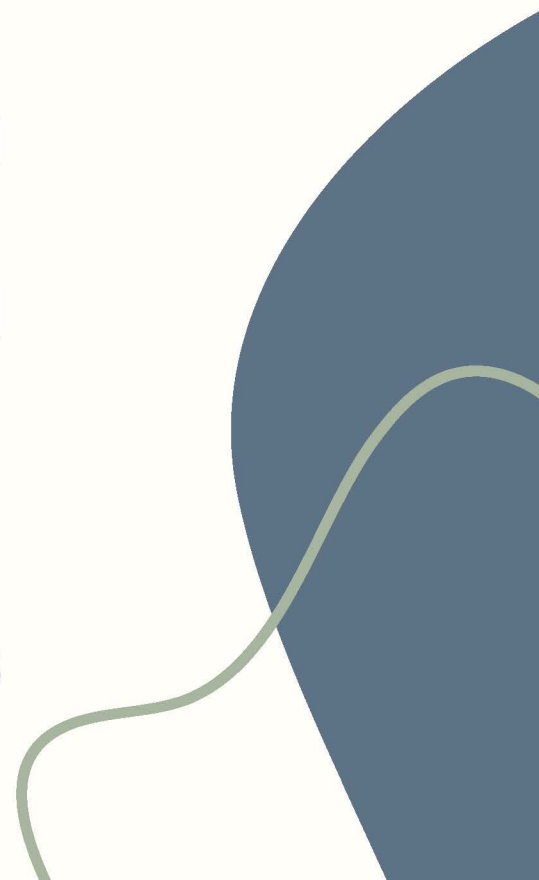


Introduction: Background for an International Audience

Key points

- Occupational therapy roles vary globally in title, scope, and regulation.
- In the U.S., Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTAs) are licensed practitioners who work under OT supervision.
- OTAs are distinct from aides or technicians and deliver skilled interventions.

Purpose of presentation

- To explain how OTAs impact the U.S. health system
 - To highlight insights that may inform workforce models internationally.
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Who are

Occupational Therapy Assistants?

Key points

- OTAs are licensed healthcare professionals who work under the supervision of Occupational Therapists (OTs).
- They help patients develop, recover, and maintain skills needed for daily living and working.
- Practice settings include hospitals, schools, skilled nursing facilities, outpatient clinics, home health, and mental health settings.

Why does this matter!?

- OTAs are a growing part of the rehabilitation workforce in the U.S.
- They help meet increasing healthcare demands caused by aging populations and chronic conditions.

So, how are we impactful?

- Expand access to care
- Cost-effectiveness and efficacy
- Patient outcome
- Inter and intradisciplinary
- Laision

How?

- Reduce service gaps
- Support workforce shortages
- Increase reach without reducing quality

Example in the field: In skilled nursing facilities and home health, OTAs allow facilities to serve more patients without compromising quality.

Patient Outcome

OTA Contributions

- High-frequency, direct patient contact
- Training in activities of daily living, mobility, cognition, and psychosocial skills
- Patient and family education

Outcomes

- Improved functional independence
- Reduced hospital readmissions
- Increased patient engagement and satisfaction



Role in Interdisciplinary and Population Health Approaches



Team-based care

- OTAs collaborate with multidisciplinary teams.
- Provide real-time feedback on patient progress and barriers.

Public health impact

- Support aging-in-place initiatives
- Fall prevention and chronic disease management
- Mental health and community participation

Global relevance

- Aligns with WHO goals for community-based rehabilitation and functional health.



Challenges, Ethics, and Policy Considerations

U.S.-specific challenges

- Reimbursement limitations and payment policy changes
- State-by-state scope-of-practice variability
- Advocacy for role recognition

Ethical considerations

- Maintaining quality of care
- Appropriate supervision and role clarity

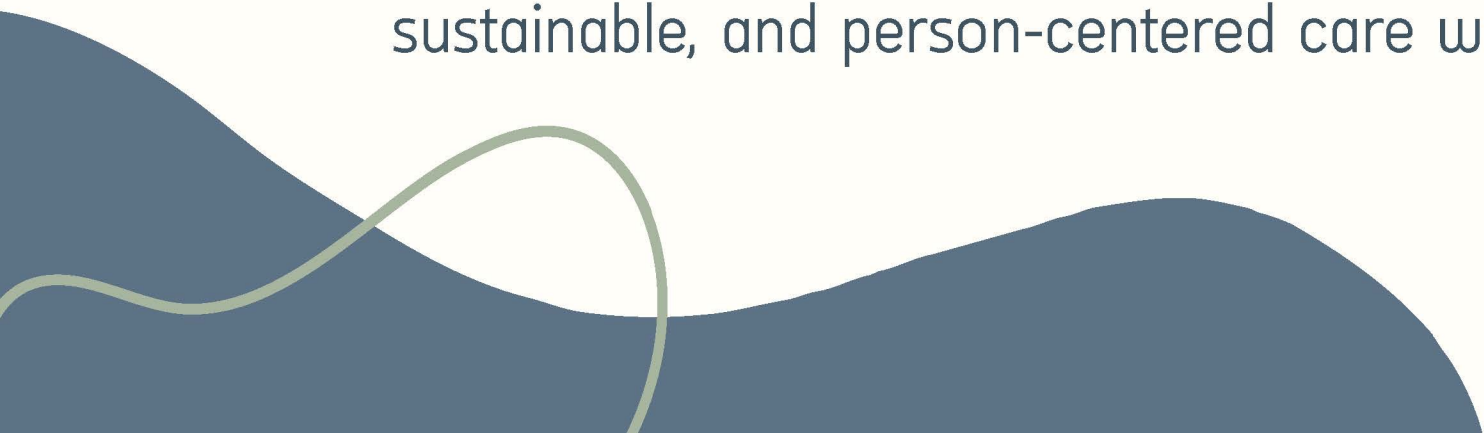
International reflection

- Importance of regulation, education standards, and professional advocacy when implementing assistant roles.
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Closing Remarks




- OTAs strengthen the U.S. health system by improving access, efficiency, and outcomes.
- Assistant-level practitioners can enhance—not replace—professional OT roles.
- The U.S. OTA model offers insights for countries addressing workforce shortages and rising care demands.
- Investing in diverse occupational therapy roles supports equitable, sustainable, and person-centered care worldwide.





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Thank You

