



Psychosocial Concerns in Acute Care: Meeting Patient Needs Through Educational Programming for Occupational Therapists



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Background and Purpose

Mental health and treating individuals seeking care holistically is at the core of the occupational therapy (OT) profession. However, despite the importance of mental health being recognized, psychosocial needs are not being adequately addressed.

Mental illness or disorders affect more than 50% of Americans, and is associated with higher healthcare costs and decreased quality of life (CDC, 2018). Yet, there is limited evidence of OT-led interventions to address psychosocial needs, especially in the acute care setting.

The purpose of this capstone was to gain advanced clinical practice skills and develop an educational program to improve OT providers knowledge capacity regarding psychosocial concerns in order to better meet their patients' needs.



Doctoral Experiential Internship Site

The internship was completed at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles, California.

- The student worked in the neuro rehabilitation unit
- It is one of the leading centers for cerebral vascular accidents in the nation
- UCLA is one of the most comprehensive and advanced healthcare systems in the U.S (#6)
- Service area includes 28 zip codes
- Serve any and all who are in need
- UCLA prides itself on the mission to deliver leading-edge patient care, research, and education

Summary of Needs Assessment

Based on semi-structured interviews with the director of rehabilitation and site mentor, the following needs arose:

- 1) Utilization of Evidence-Based Assessments
- 2) Decreasing Patient Falls
- 3) Psychosocial Needs

Summary of Literature Review

High Prevalence and Inadequate Services

- Study found that physician recognition of psychosocial needs or mental health concerns was as low as 6% (Bernal, et al., 2000)
- Patient populations including cancer, stroke, cardiac, transplant, trauma, and pediatric had increased % of psychosocial needs than normal population

Negative Consequences

- Not intervening on psychosocial needs early can negatively impact rehab outcomes (Carod-Artal, 2012)
- Lack of services has been shown to exacerbate physical, cognitive, and emotional symptoms (Sleight & Duker, 2016)

Decreased Knowledge Capacity

- OTs may not have been introduced to evidence that supports treatment of both psychosocial and physical needs (Hildebrand, 2015)
- Lack of education may be contributing to decreased OT participation in a variety of patient populations (Sleight & Duker, 2016)

Learning Objectives

1. Student will provide client-centered, safe, and effective care in the acute inpatient setting
2. Student will create and educate OT staff on a quick screen psychosocial needs assessment and additional assessments that can be utilized in acute care
3. Student will facilitate a training program for OTs to address 5 psychosocial needs and related interventions

Program Topics

The Mental Health is Health program for occupational therapy providers addressed the following topics:

- Prevalence of unmet needs in various patient populations
- Negative consequences of unmet needs
- Assessments to utilize
- Education and Interventions for common psychosocial needs: Depression, anxiety, stress, sleep, and sexuality

Project Outcomes

Project outcomes were determined using a mixed method approach and pre-test/post-test surveys.

Pre-test Survey Results

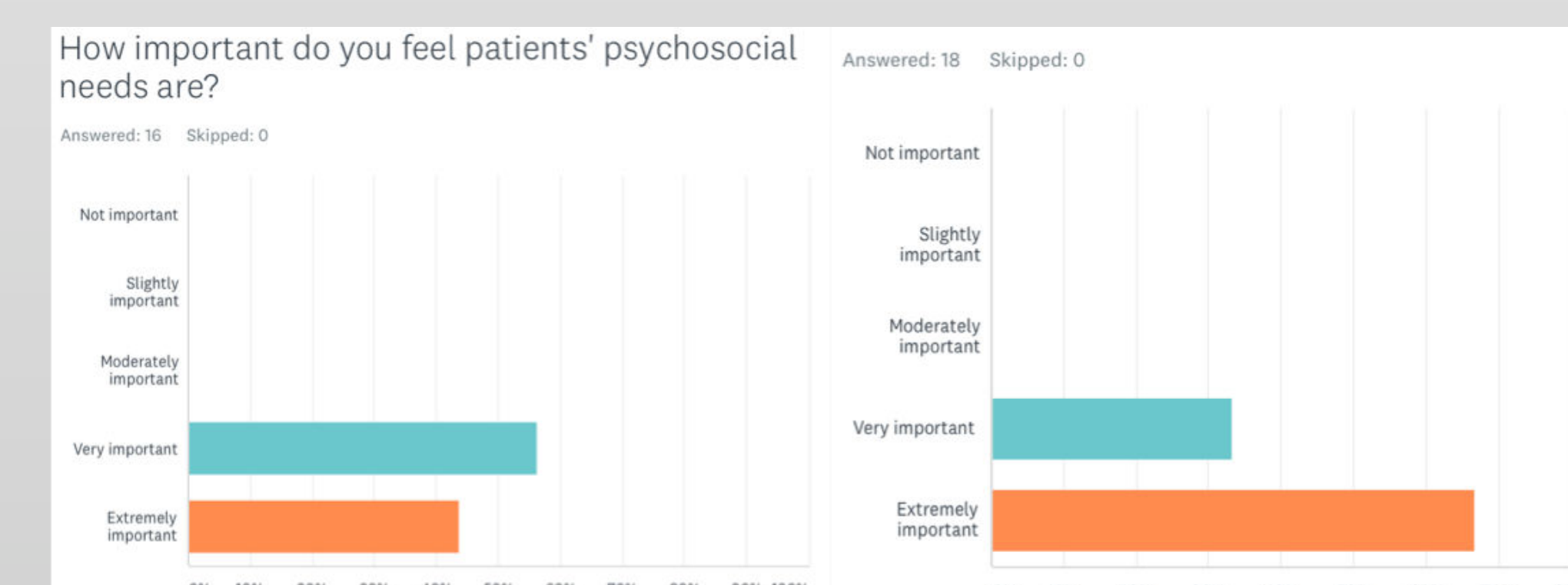
- “How often do needs arise?”
 - 85% reported “often”
- “How often do you address needs?”
 - 85% said “sometimes” and 15% “rarely”
- “How prepared do you feel to address these needs?”
 - 57% felt “slightly prepared”
- 100% had education on psychosocial needs in graduate school but only 14% felt capable of addressing needs

Qualitative Themes

- Staff perception and willingness may be a barrier to needs being met
 - 73% felt it was another professions’ responsibility
- Decreased level of preparedness limits intervention
 - 43% report lack of education prevented intervention
- Limited time/resources impact patients’ needs being adequately met
 - 20% felt they did not have the time/resources to properly address concerns

Post-test Survey Results

- “How prepared do you feel to address these needs?”
 - 44% said “moderately prepared” and 28% “extremely prepared”
- “How often will you address psychosocial needs now that resources are available?”
 - 44% reported “often” and 22% “always”
- Perceived importance of psychosocial needs drastically changed pre-test to post-test. This is significant as perceived importance may determine whether a provider addresses a patient’s psychosocial needs



Overall Result: The project had positive outcomes of OTs reporting increased levels of preparedness as well as the frequency at which they will address psychosocial needs.

Scholarly Deliverables

The following scholarly deliverables were designed for the Mental Health is Health education program:

- Hard copy binder with resources on psychosocial needs in acute care: standardized assessments, articles, etc.
- Handouts for patient education and interventions
- Psychosocial Needs Assessment Checklist

Scan the following code with your phone's camera and click on the link to see all of the scholarly deliverables!



Implications for OT

This study demonstrated the need for stronger education/training on psychosocial needs

- Despite education in graduate school, a majority of OTs felt they could not address psychosocial needs
- Increased staff training and level of preparedness may decrease unmet needs and negative consequences

Increase resources/tools for providers through standard sources e.g. AOTA

- A key theme was providers feeling unable to address needs due to lack of resources
- OTs responded they were more likely to address needs once resources and handouts were made available

Increase evidence on interventions

- One limitation was the lack of evidence-based interventions. This could be addressed through further research on the effectiveness of various methods

Acknowledgements & References

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