

Strategies to Instill a Culture of Evidence Based Practices in Occupational Therapy

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Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) is one of the most valuable resources for occupational therapists, as it allows the best research to be combined with clinical experience to provide the best therapy outcomes¹. It strengthens outcomes, protects occupational therapy's position as professionals in health care, and allows for more effective decision-making. Occupational therapy is a natural blend of science and compassion, because we treat illness while improving quality of life, restoring independence and encouraging patients to achieve personal aspirations².

Occupational therapy is inherently person-centered, providing care that is effective and embraces cultural relevance³, a systematic and layered approach through EBP which is a necessary context for ethical and trustworthy approach to decision-making that can blend our care with peer review evidence while respecting the cultural, social and contextual realities of our patients. Sadly, there are great obstacles to implementing EBP in Pakistan. They include lack of access to relevant research, lack of meaningful resources, and no supportive research culture. Strategies at national level should be implemented such as career path and key performance indicator may be driven by publishing local evidence, continuous professional development program may be based on enhancing research skills⁴ and conducting collaborative national or international research projects. These will ensure that evidence-based practice is sustainable and practicable, while accounting for the economic realities and rampant and normalized practices⁵. These strategies will not only incorporate evidence-based practice in occupational therapy in Pakistan, but also instill a culture of compassionate and scientific care as there is a need to shift from old ways of thinking, which obstruct innovation and learning, from untested, unverified and poorly formulated traditional methods of intervention.

As practitioners, educators, policy-makers and institutions we can make this shift happen together! I call upon to all stakeholders: students, professionals, academia, health industry and policy makers to make most of this opportunity of first ever Pakistan journal of Occupational therapy and health in engaging and developing ground breaking national guidelines that are culturally situated and demonstrate the inclusion of occupational therapy in promoting the functional lives and psychosocial reintegration of individuals, while contributing to the preventative measurement of Non communicable diseases.

References

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