

Which assessments, interventions, and best practices are actually used by occupational therapists and physical therapists in the management with Cerebral Palsy (CP)?

childhood
disability
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Summary

This study describes occupational therapy (OT) and physical therapy (PT) practices for young children with CP in Quebec, Canada. This is an important issue as cerebral palsy (CP) constitutes a substantial portion of pediatric rehabilitation. Pediatric OTs and PTs were interviewed using a structured telephone interview based on vignettes of two typical children with CP at two age points (18 months and 4 years) and reported practices were grouped according to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF). The majority of PTs and OTs reported using at least one standardized pediatric assessment. Interventions focused primarily on impairments and primary function (e.g., gait function, activities of daily living), with little attention given to interventions related to play and recreation/leisure. The need to apply research findings to clinical practice, as well as the need for more training and education specific to CP, was also reported. The need for a basic standard of OT and PT management as well as strategies to encourage knowledge dissemination regarding current best practice was also identified.

About the study

OT and PT practices for young children with CP were found to be focused more on the ICF domains of 'impairments' and 'functional activities', rather than on 'participation'. The present study demonstrates important gaps in the incorporation of evidence-based best practices into clinical practice for both professions and highlights the need for guidelines for OT and PT management for children with CP. Collaboration between researchers and clinicians is needed to further explore (1) the effectiveness of current clinical practices and (2) the feasibility and clinical implications of innovative practices.

Reference

[Saleh, M., Korner-Bitensky, N., Snider, L., Malouin, F., Mazer, B., Kennedy, E., Roy, M-A. \(2008\). Actual vs. best practices for young children with cerebral palsy: A survey of paediatric occupational therapists and physical therapists in Quebec, Canada. *Developmental Neurorehabilitation*, 11 \(1\), 60 – 80.](#)