



# Occupational Therapy

July 2026

**The aim of this current awareness bulletin is to provide a digest of recent guidelines, reports, research and best practice in Occupational Therapy. Part of this bulletin draws on content created by Manchester University NHS FT and University Hospitals Dorset NHS Trust**

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## Published Research

**1. Attention and athletic performance: A pilot study from a person–environment–occupation–performance model perspective**

**Item Type:** Journal Article

**Authors:** Akel, Sultan;Çetin, Tunahan;Başaran, Mustafa Talha and Uğurlu, Ümit

**Publication Date:** 2026

**Journal:** British Journal of Occupational Therapy 89(4), pp. 275–283

**Abstract:** Introduction: Attention is a critical component of athletic performance, especially in sports that require quick decision-making and strategic responses. This pilot study aimed to design and evaluate a structured attention training intervention based on the person-environment-occupation-performance (PEOP) model to enhance the attentional and athletic abilities of wheelchair basketball players. Methods: A one-group pre–post-test design was used with eight professional athletes. The intervention incorporated PEOP-based principles by addressing personal (cognitive), environmental (distracting stimuli) and occupational (basketball-specific tasks) factors and occupational performance. The athletes participated in 10 sessions combining attention-focused cognitive strategies and simulated sports activities. Attention skills were assessed through a customised performance task co-developed by occupational therapists and the team coach. Findings: Results showed reductions in attentional errors, increased shot accuracy and improved task completion times. These outcomes reflect functional gains in cognitive performance under game-like conditions and support the relevance of PEOP-guided interventions in adaptive sports contexts. Conclusion: This pilot study demonstrates the feasibility and utility of PEOP-informed attention training for athletes with physical disabilities. By incorporating cognitive skill development into meaningful athletic activities, occupational therapy can effectively contribute to the overall development of athletes.



**Access or request full text:** <https://libkey.io/10.1177/03080226251384176>

**URL:** <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=55a52c70-1771-36b7-ab57-709d4f6b253c>

## 2. Exploring the Current Role and Interventions of Occupational Therapy in High-Risk Maternal Health: A Descriptive Qualitative Study

**Item Type:** Journal Article

**Authors:** Ariens, Olivia;Freeman, Kaitlin and Mack, Amanda

**Publication Date:** 2026

**Journal:** Occupational Therapy in Health Care , pp. 1–21

**Abstract:** This descriptive qualitative study explored the roles and interventions of occupational therapy practitioners (OTPs) working with high-risk maternal health populations. Seven OTPs from four regions across the U.S. participated in semi-structured interviews, which were analyzed through inductive coding. Five themes emerged: (1) Participation- and Occupation-Focused Practice, (2) Psychosocial Emphasis, (3) Client-Focused Care, (4) Specialized Services, and (5) Navigating the Realities of Healthcare. Findings demonstrate how OTPs support role transitions, mental health, specialized physical needs, and interprofessional collaboration. Results highlight occupational therapy's unique contributions to maternal health, emphasizing occupation-centered, client-driven care while underscoring the need for clearer role definition, education, and research to expand maternal health practice.

**Access or request full text:** <https://libkey.io/10.1080/07380577.2026.2685511>

**URL:** <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=46960cd5-0806-3299-bc94-6a44093cb095>

## 3. Developing occupational therapy and physiotherapy clinical support workers in their role in supporting student education

**Item Type:** Journal Article

**Authors:** Bradley, Gemma;Bedding, Nina and Smith, Sarah

**Publication Date:** 2026

**Journal:** British Journal of Occupational Therapy 89(4), pp. 264–274

**Abstract:** Introduction: Global healthcare services face increasing pressures and workforce shortages. But at the same time, there are increasing learners in practice as part of longer-term workforce strategies, which, in turn, create extra demands on educators and teams. Anecdotally, we understand that clinical support workers (CSWs) are sharing responsibilities for student learning, yet there is limited understanding of this



involvement or activities to support role development. The aims of this study were to (1) explore the CSW role in the practice education of students and (2) evaluate a training programme for CSWs. Method: A mixed-methods design was utilised; 17 CSWs completed a survey prior to completing a training programme, and 11 participated in focus groups after the programme. Findings: We identified five themes: (1) supporting students is an expectation, (2) supporting students 'boosts the role', (3) legitimacy of the CSW role to support students, (4) application of new learning to practice and (5) enablers and barriers to engagement with the programme. Conclusion: CSWs are part of practice education 'Communities of Practice', evidenced through regular involvement with student learning. Responsibilities for student learning are perceived as adding value, although there is an absence of structures to legitimise the role. CSWs identified barriers and enablers to engaging with the programme, such as blended learning approaches and management support.

**Access or request full text:** <https://libkey.io/10.1177/03080226251379996>

**URL:** <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=b0f4ec90-f3c1-3295-86a8-580a4bb48f43>

#### 4. Exploring occupational therapists' perceptions of the use of functional electrical stimulation in adult stroke rehabilitation

**Item Type:** Journal Article

**Authors:** Frew, Sarah and Breytenbach, Fiona

**Publication Date:** 2026

**Journal:** Disability & Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology , pp. 1–19

**Abstract:** Abstract\nIMPLICATIONS FOR REHABILITATION**Purpose:** Stroke is one of the leading global causes of disability, with motor deficits, particularly in the upper limb, being among the most common and debilitating consequences. Occupational therapists are crucial members of the multidisciplinary team, working to enhance patients' participation in daily activities by addressing motor impairments through interventions such as Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES). However, an evidence-practice gap exists in the application of FES. This study aimed to explore occupational therapists' perceptions of using FES in adult stroke rehabilitation in Gauteng, South Africa. **Materials and Methods:** This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design. Twelve occupational therapists participated in semi-structured interviews conducted *via* an online platform. The research population included clinicians working in the neurorehabilitation field in Gauteng, South Africa from both public and private healthcare sectors. An inductive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. **Results:** Three themes emerged from this qualitative study, namely, 'A Tug of War', 'The Lost Leading the Lost' and 'A Puzzle of Practicality'. These themes unravel the perceptions of occupational therapists and explore the factors that influence the use of FES in stroke rehabilitation. **Conclusion:** Many identified perceptions and factors challenge the use of FES in adult stroke rehabilitation. Addressing these challenges is essential for improving evidence-based practices in occupational therapy, especially for motor impairments after stroke. Training on FES needs to be enhanced at an undergraduate and postgraduate level for improved application of the technology. Open-loop FES currently does not align with



the complex movement patterns required for occupation-based intervention and is therefore best suited as a preparatory modality. Policy, protocol, and guideline development is needed for a unified approach to FES use in stroke rehabilitation. The commercial availability and access to closed-loop FES systems should be explored by rehabilitation technology manufacturers and sales representatives. Training on FES needs to be enhanced at an undergraduate and postgraduate level for improved application of the technology. Open-loop FES currently does not align with the complex movement patterns required for occupation-based intervention and is therefore best suited as a preparatory modality. Policy, protocol, and guideline development is needed for a unified approach to FES use in stroke rehabilitation. The commercial availability and access to closed-loop FES systems should be explored by rehabilitation technology manufacturers and sales representatives.

**Access or request full text:** <https://libkey.io/10.1080/17483107.2026.2683898>

**URL:** <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=af078b78-b565-330e-b64d-8c3f1a1a2ecc>

**5. Perceptions of patients with heart failure guide an understanding of initial enrolment and long-term adherence to a home-based, non-aerobic, gentle exercise programme**

**Item Type:** Journal Article

**Authors:** Gould, Kathleen Ahern and Bowen Brady, Helene, M.

**Publication Date:** 2026

**Journal:** Evidence-Based Nursing 29(2), pp. 79

**Access or request full text:** <https://libkey.io/10.1136/ebnurs-2024-104075>

**URL:** <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=911a9153-c40c-3001-b9e3-4e6de9982eb5>

**6. Gamification in the Medicine and Surgery course for occupational therapy and physiotherapy undergraduate students**

**Item Type:** Journal Article

**Authors:** Jankowitz, Amanda and Keller, Monique M.

**Publication Date:** 2026

**Journal:** South African Journal of Physiotherapy 82(2), pp. 8

**Source:** <https://sajp.co.za/index.php/sajp/article/view/2341>

**7. Comparative effectiveness of reminiscence-based therapies on depressive symptoms and life satisfaction in older adults: a network meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials**

**Item Type:** Journal Article



**Authors:** Lin, Chiao-Ling;Arifin, Hidayat;Janitra, Fitria Endah;Aini, Nur;Jiang, Ping;Han, Hui-Mei and Hsu, Wen-Chuan

**Publication Date:** 2026

**Journal:** Age and Ageing 55(3), pp. afag075

**Source:** <https://academic.oup.com/ageing/article-abstract/55/3/afag075/8586699?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

### 8. Bereaved mothering: A mother's memories in the processes of bereavement and self-knowledge

**Item Type:** Journal Article

**Authors:** Mazzoni, Marcela Fabiana Rodgher;Dahdah, Daniel Ferreira;Valete, Cristina Ortiz Sobrinho and Joaquim, Regina Helena Vitale Torkomian

**Publication Date:** 2026

**Journal:** British Journal of Occupational Therapy 89(4), pp. 284–293

**Abstract:** Introduction: Neonatal death is a significant public health indicator. To provide adequate care for mothers and considering that this loss is one of the bereavements that impact occupations, identity, and social participation, it is necessary to study it. The purpose of this study was to understand motherhood in the bereavement process and self-knowledge and to describe the mother's perception about participating in a support group for neonatal loss. Methods: This is a case study that used semistructured interviews and a timeline with a woman who experienced neonatal loss. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data, which was triangulated with the timeline description. Findings: Three categories emerged, which dealt with the impacts on the bereaved mother's life, the mother's occupational identity, and participation in a support group. Conclusion: It was concluded that the mother's strategies and her support network were essential for her recovery. In addition, the construction and recognition of maternal identity require time, reframing, and support. Participation in a support group also had a positive impact on bereavement.

**Access or request full text:** <https://libkey.io/10.1177/03080226251384174>

**URL:** <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=20aa7ac1-a52e-350f-93c1-e6c77f1cd539>

### 9. Multi-Stakeholder Voices: A Qualitative Study on Occupational Therapy in Acute Mental Health Care

**Item Type:** Journal Article

**Authors:** Mkhize, Phakeme Z.;Mpanza, December M. and Naidoo, Deshini

**Publication Date:** 2026

**Journal:** Occupational Therapy in Mental Health , pp. 1–24



**Abstract:** AbstractOccupational therapy is integral to acute mental health care, yet its role remains poorly understood within multidisciplinary teams. This study explored stakeholder perspectives on the role of occupational therapy in acute mental health care in South Africa. An exploratory qualitative design involving semi-structured interviews with 19 stakeholders working in the field of acute mental health was used. Data was thematically analyzed. Four themes emerged: functional assessment and rehabilitation; therapeutic use of occupation; psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery support; and system-level roles, collaboration, and service gaps. While occupational therapy is valued, role ambiguity and systemic constraints continue to limit its impact.

**Access or request full text:** <https://libkey.io/10.1080/0164212x.2026.2682401>

**URL:** <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=e365e8d1-2e86-35ef-aaa5-b90bfc690150>

**10. Occupational therapists' perceived ability to facilitate reasonable accommodations in the workplace for employees with major depressive disorders**

**Item Type:** Journal Article

**Authors:** Ramano, Mpho S.;Buys, Tania and Kotzé, Carla

**Publication Date:** 2026

**Journal:** African Journal of Disability 15, pp. 11

**Source:** <https://ajod.org/index.php/ajod/article/view/1924>

**11. How Mindfulness and Yoga Practices are Implemented in Occupational Therapy**

**Item Type:** Journal Article

**Authors:** Roberts, Madeline

**Publication Date:** 2026

**Source:** [https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5060&context=honors\\_theses](https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5060&context=honors_theses)

**12. Acute and Inpatient Occupational Therapy Practice for People with Chronic Conditions Who are Experiencing Homelessness**

**Item Type:** Journal Article

**Authors:** Simpson, Emily K.;Mokate, Anne K.;Gibbs, Elizabeth A. and Duric, Nina K.

**Publication Date:** 2026

**Journal:** Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice 24(2), pp. 24

**Source:** <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2968&context=ijahsp/>



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## Reviews

### 1. Sensory processing and its relevance to occupational performance: a systematic review

**Item Type:** Journal Article

**Authors:** Gibello-Rufo, Alicia; Garrido-Ardila, Elisa; Jiménez-Palomares, María; Cilleros-Sánchez, María Carmen; González-Sánchez, Blanca and Rodríguez-Mansilla, Juan

**Publication Date:** 2026

**Journal:** Frontiers in Psychology 17, pp. 1844400

**Abstract:** Background Sensory processing allows us to interpret and respond adaptively to internal and external stimuli. Its alteration can cause difficulties in sensory modulation, integration or discrimination, affecting negatively occupational performance, functional participation, well-being, and quality of life. Understanding these alterations is essential for designing personalised interventions that promote autonomy and participation in daily life. Objectives To analyse the relationship between sensory processing and performance. Methodology A systematic review with PROSPERO ID number is CRD420251102155, was conducted following the PRISMA protocol. Electronic searches were performed in PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science, including studies published between 2015 and 2025. Participants with or without a diagnosis of neurodevelopmental conditions from childhood to old age were considered, as well as interventions that analysed the relationship between sensory processing and occupational performance. Studies with a quantitative, qualitative or mixed approach were considered, with results reflecting the relationship between sensory processing and occupational performance assessed using a standardised or validated tool. Methodological quality was assessed using CASPe and STROBE, depending on the study design. Results Twenty studies were included, with considerable heterogeneity in terms of design, sample, age, and variables. Consistent associations were identified between sensory processing disorders-especially hyperactivity, avoidance, and under-registration-and difficulties in personal autonomy, motor planning, social participation, emotional self-regulation, and psychological well-being. Conclusion Sensory processing is key to understanding occupational performance. Sensory difficulties significantly affect occupational participation and individual functionality. Systematically assessing the sensory processing allows for more effective interventions. The importance of further research using rigorous methodologies, especially in undiagnosed adults and community settings, is highlighted. Systematic Review

Registration <https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/PROSPERO/view/CRD420251102155>; Registrati on number CRD42025110215.

**Access or request full text:** <https://libkey.io/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1844400>

**URL:** <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=7e5bf861-7cba-3967-af60->



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**2. The Functional Impact of Occupational Therapy Interventions in Parkinson's disease: A Comprehensive Literature Review of Emerging Trends**

**Item Type:** Journal Article

**Authors:** Maragkou, Georgia and Bablekos, George

**Publication Date:** Source: <https://jmed-sciences.uniwa.gr/images/Articles/July%202026/J%20Med%20Sci%20July%204%202026.pdf>

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**Professional Development/ Reports/News**

Royal College of Occupational Therapists (2026) *Occupational therapy practice guideline for dementia: supporting prevention, participation and living well (draft for consultation)*. Available at:

<https://www.rcot.co.uk/media/2818/download?attachment> (Accessed: 16 June 2026) [[rcot.co.uk](http://rcot.co.uk)]

Royal College of Occupational Therapists (2026) *Help shape what comes next for AHPs*. Available at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/latest-news/help-shape-what-comes-next-ahps> (Accessed: 16 June 2026). [[rcot.co.uk](http://rcot.co.uk)]