



Occupational Therapy

October 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. Children's perspectives on occupational participation in UK primary schools

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Liddell, Jamie; Sims, Tara and Clare Sugarman-Clarke

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: British Journal of Occupational Therapy , pp. 03080226261454900

Abstract: Introduction: Occupational participation is a fundamental right for all children, yet little is known about how UK primary-aged children experience it in school. This study explored their views on meaningful occupations, school demands, and factors influencing participation. Method: Eleven children aged 7-11 from three UK mainstream primary schools participated in the first phase of a Critical Participatory Action Research study. Data were collected through photo tours and discussion groups and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. The Canadian Model of Occupational Participation (CanMOP) guided interpretation. Findings: Five themes emerged: (1) Environment, (2) Rules and Fairness, (3) Friendship, (4) Learning, and (5) Power of the Teacher. Children valued comfort, autonomy, emotional safety, and relationships. Participation was shaped by rules, sensory environments, peer dynamics, and teacher behaviours. Canadian Model of Occupational Participation highlighted influences across micro, meso, and macro levels. Conclusion: Listening to children's voices is essential for creating inclusive school environments. Occupational therapists can promote participation through universal, tiered, and collaborative approaches that address individual and systemic barriers.

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Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1177/03080226261454900>

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/03080226261454900>

2. Experiences of autistic transgender and gender diverse adults undergoing gender-affirming hormone therapy and the influence on occupational identity outcomes

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Miller, Sarah Louise; Bourke-Taylor, Helen; Dixon, Karen and Upreti, Rita

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Australian Occupational Therapy Journal 73(5), pp. e70121

Abstract: Introduction Autistic transgender and gender diverse (TGD) adults often report additional barriers to health-care access and occupational participation. Gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) consists of hormonal medications a person may choose to take to increase alignment of physical features with their gender identity. Consumer and Community Involvement This research project was conducted in response to patient and clinician feedback; however, no consumers were involved in the setup or analysis of the study. Methods Six autistic TGD adults undergoing GAHT at a statewide tertiary gender endocrinology clinic participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews and underwent an Adolescent/Adult Sensory Profile (AASP) assessment. Secondary analysis of qualitative data utilised thematic analysis and triangulation with AASP results through the lens of the doing, being, becoming, belonging framework to understand how autistic TGD adults achieve occupational identity. Results Autistic TGD adults experienced improved quality of life, mental health, and occupational identity outcomes as a result of GAHT. Being TGD and autistic posed unique challenges for autistic TGD adults in doing tasks associated with GAHT, including navigating health-care and social environments. Gender-affirming physical changes and experiences increased participants' engagement in gendered occupations and roles. Conclusion For autistic TGD adults who choose to medically transition, GAHT can be an important gender-affirming occupation in enabling occupational identity acquisition. The results of this study highlight a role for occupational therapists within gender-affirming care settings to enhance patient care.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1111/1440-1630.70121>



URL: <https://research.ebsco.com/plink/10f4e41f-3b01-34f4-a290-d6faa4ce5731>

3. Implementation Considerations for an Occupational Therapy-Led Mental Health Care Navigation Program for Older Adult Patients

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Motsenok, Marina;Mirbaha, Shaghayegh;Clarke, Mary;Morrow, Kristin;Knoepfli, Amanda;Ziegler, Naomi;DasGupta, Tracey and Hitzig, Sander L.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Health♦Serv♦Insights 19, pp. 11786329261486980

Abstract: Background Older adults with mental health (MH) challenges often face significant barriers when navigating complex healthcare systems, especially during critical transitions, such as hospital discharge. These challenges are compounded by comorbid physical illnesses, cognitive impairments, and social determinants of health. Objectives This qualitative study aimed to gain insights from patients and providers on factors influencing the implementation of an innovative occupational therapy (OT) led Patient Navigation Program (PNP) supporting older adults with complex MH care needs. Methods We conducted a qualitative study that was informed by the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Results Seven patients and caregivers, and 17 healthcare professionals who served as the MH PNP or collaborated with the MH PNP participated in the study. MH Navigators offered valuable, specialized skills to address gaps in MH and functional outcomes among older adults and were highly effective at bridging hospital and community care. However, the success of such a role depends on alignment across organizations, sufficient professional support, clear role expectations, and integrated team structures. Significant barriers for implementation included organizational cultural differences, system constraints, and the high complexity of patient needs. Conclusion The OT-led MH PNP holds significant promise for optimizing care delivery for older adults with MH care needs by bridging gaps in the healthcare system and fostering better continuity of care. Insights from this study can refine navigation processes, enhance interprofessional collaboration, improve patient experiences, and provide valuable guidance for implementing MH navigation programs at other sites.; Background Older adults with mental health (MH) challenges often face significant barriers when navigating complex healthcare systems, especially during critical transitions, such as hospital discharge. These challenges are compounded by comorbid physical illnesses, cognitive impairments, and social determinants of health. Objectives This qualitative study aimed to gain insights from patients and providers on factors influencing the implementation of an innovative occupational therapy (OT) led Patient Navigation Program (PNP) supporting older adults with complex MH care needs. Methods We conducted a qualitative study that was informed by the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Results Seven patients and caregivers, and 17 healthcare professionals who served as the MH PNP or collaborated with the MH PNP participated in the study. MH Navigators offered valuable, specialized skills to address gaps in MH and functional outcomes among older adults and were highly effective at bridging hospital and community care. However, the success of such a role depends on alignment across organizations, sufficient professional support, clear role expectations, and integrated



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Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1177/11786329261486980>

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/11786329261486980>

4. Cautious integration of large language models in diabetes care: An occupational therapy perspective

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: null, Anas

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Intelligent Medicine 06(04), pp. 448–449

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1016/j.imed.2025.12.012>

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.imed.2025.12.012>

5. Climate-related migration: Is occupational therapy prepared?

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Rohat Yazici, M.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: British Journal of Occupational Therapy , pp. 03080226261484744

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1177/03080226261484744>

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/03080226261484744>

6. Occupational Therapy in Haemophilia Care: Perceived Role, Barriers and Expectations Among People With Haemophilia, Family Caregivers and Occupational Therapists

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Seoane-Martín, Marta Elisa;Cuesta-Barriuso, Rub and Rodríguez-Martínez, María Carmen



Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Haemophilia : The Official Journal of the World Federation of Hemophilia

Abstract: Introduction Evidence on the application of occupational therapy in people with haemophilia is limited, and its integration into routine care remains scarce. Objective To explore the perceived role, barriers, and expectations related to occupational therapy in haemophilia care from the perspective of patients, caregivers, and occupational therapists. Methods An exploratory qualitative study was conducted using six online focus groups between September 2025 and May 2026. By purposive sampling, 32 participants were included: 11 patients with haemophilia A or B of moderate or severe phenotype, 10 caregivers, and 11 occupational therapists. The sessions followed a semi-structured guide, were transcribed verbatim, and analysed using a deductive-inductive thematic approach. Results Patients and caregivers described difficulties related to joint damage, pain, autonomy, activities of daily living, and participation, as well as spontaneously developed coping strategies. Knowledge of occupational therapy was generally limited. The three subgroups perceived it as a potentially useful resource to adapt activities and environments, prevent risks, promote self-care, and promote autonomy and participation. The main barriers were lack of information and visibility, absence of referral pathways, unequal access, scarcity of resources, and limited specific training in haemophilia. Conclusion Occupational therapy was perceived as a possible complement to multidisciplinary haemophilia care. Greater visibility, targeted training, clear referral pathways, and studies evaluating structured interventions are required.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1111/hae.70398>

URL: <https://research.ebsco.com/plink/c9fa44d6-0fc1-3d4d-aa73-36b9b3f91bac>

7. Chronic pain and mobile health: Are the apps that occupational therapists recommend of high quality?

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Smith, Jessica; Tran, Thuy; Hunt, Jacqui and Liddiard, Katrina

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Australian Occupational Therapy Journal 73(5), pp. e70111

Abstract: Abstract Introduction Chronic pain is a biopsychosocial experience that can impact peoples' ability to participate in everyday occupations. Mobile health applications, or apps, have the potential to make chronic pain services more effective and accessible. However, the quality of many health apps is not known, which creates a critical challenge for occupational therapists who aim to deliver evidence-informed intervention. This study rated the quality of apps available for Australian occupational therapists to use with clients who have chronic pain. Consumer and Community Involvement No consumer and community involvement. Methods This study used a cross-sectional descriptive design to (1) identify chronic pain-relevant apps through browser and app store searches, and through a survey of Australian occupational therapists; and (2) evaluate the quality of the apps relevant to occupational therapy practice, at a single point in time, using the Mobile Application Rating Scale. Results A total of 27 eligible apps were identified (n = 27). The 27 apps were rated for quality. The mean Objective Quality score of all apps was



3.33/5.00 (acceptable), with a range of 2.14 (poor) to 4.13 (good). The mean Objective Subsection Quality scores were 3.88 (acceptable) for Functionality, 3.25 (acceptable) for Aesthetics, 3.23 (acceptable) for Information, and 2.96 (poor) for Engagement. The mean Subjective Quality score of all apps was 2.67 (poor), with a range of 1.00 (inadequate) to 4.25 (good). Conclusion There was no consistent standard to the quality of chronic pain-relevant apps identified. Occupational therapists may not be identifying all high-quality chronic pain-relevant apps currently available. Findings highlight that occupational therapists lack access to an easy method to identify and verify high-quality apps for use with clients who have chronic pain. Further work is needed to ensure occupational therapists can identify and evaluate the quality of chronic pain-relevant apps in a rapidly changing field of practice.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1111/1440-1630.70111>

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1440-1630.70111>

8. Occupational therapy enabling inclusive education for students with extensive support needs: A qualitative exploratory multiple-case study

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Sundar, Savitha;Vas, Asha;Taub, Deborah;Evetts, Cynthia;Hintz, Louann and Fette, Claudette

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Journal of Occupational Therapy, Schools, & Early Intervention , pp. 1–12

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1080/19411243.2026.2726175>

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19411243.2026.2726175>

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Reviews

1. Clinical outcomes and satisfaction among low back pain patients following orthopedic manual therapy: systematic review

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Kavita, Kelvin Nzomo;Karuguti, Wallace M. and Matheri, Joseph M.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Bulletin of Faculty of Physical Therapy 31(1), pp. 1–17

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1186/s43161-026-00375-6>



URL: <https://research.ebsco.com/plink/8b10b872-e6b5-3d90-923b-3e2f648a3a39>

2. The Association Between Atypical Sensory Processing in Adults with Mental Illness and Occupational Participation and Engagement: A Scoping Review

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Machingura, Tawanda;Hudson, Carly and Waters, Lauren

Publication Date: 2026

Source: <https://www.preprints.org/manuscript/202609.0515>

3. Occupational Therapy Interventions for Pediatric Cancer: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Obembe, Adebimpe;Riedel, Emma;Wilson, Catherine;Donahey, Chloe;Vredenburg, Haley and Merz, Whitney

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Physical & Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics , pp. 1–25

Abstract: AbstractAimMethodsResultsConclusionTo examine the effects of occupational therapy (OT) interventions on physical, psychosocial, physical activity, and health-related quality of life outcomes in children with cancer. This systematic review and meta-analysis followed the PRISMA guidelines. The eight databases searched were Academic Search Complete, CINAHL Complete, MasterFILE Complete, PubMed, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, SPORTDiscus, MEDLINE, and ProQuest. Reference lists of relevant articles were hand-searched, and the methodological quality of each study was assessed using the Cochrane Risk of Bias 2 tool for randomized controlled trials (RCTs). 30 RCTs comprising 1,808 children undergoing cancer treatment were included in the review. Interventions included creative arts ($n = 3$), exercise ($n = 11$), combined physical and psychosocial training ($n = 3$), web- and technology-based approaches ($n = 4$), animal-assisted interventions ($n = 4$), cognitive interventions ($n = 3$), and play-based OT and wish-granting programs ($n = 2$). Overall, OT interventions improved physical and psychosocial outcomes. Meta-analyses demonstrated significant post-intervention effects on pain, fatigue, upper- and lower-body muscle strength, anxiety/depression, communication, psychosocial functioning, physical activity, and health-related quality of life (Standardized Mean Differences ranging from -0.49 to -0.96 ; $p \leq 0.04$). OT interventions have the potential to enhance physical and psychosocial well-being and support functional outcomes in children undergoing cancer treatment. Future research should examine interventions by specific cancer types and occupation-based outcomes, such as daily living skills.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1080/01942638.2026.2722993>

URL: <https://research.ebsco.com/plink/7feac18a-4b75-349f-829c-95f7797a1b6f>



4. A Rapid Review of occupational therapy intervention for neonatal care

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Van der Walt, Janke;Engelbrecht, Madri;Van Biljon, Hester M. and Soeker, Shaheed M.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: South African Journal of Occupational Therapy 56(2), pp. 1–9

Source: <https://journals.assaf.org.za/index.php/sajot/article/view/26053>

5. Exploring professional reasoning in occupational therapy: A scoping review of recent research

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Sánchez-Zamorano, Soledad;Rolack-Jaramillo, Samanta;Ossandón-Pérez, MaríaPaz and Moruno-Miralles, Pedro

Publication Date: 2025

Journal: British Journal of Occupational Therapy 88(6), pp. 333–343

Abstract: Background: Professional reasoning in occupational therapy has become a key line of research. Updating and analyzing recent publications is crucial for the discipline. The objective of the research was to describe new findings and changes in the characteristics of research on professional reasoning in occupational therapy between 2019 and 2023. Method: A scoping review was used with the aim of identifying the development and scope of the literature on professional reasoning in occupational therapy from 2019 to 2023. The review was conducted in five stages following the PRISMA-ScR guidelines. Results: Seventy-six articles were described in terms of their nature and volume under the following categories: specific fields of practice, educational strategies for professional reasoning, theoretical discussions, and instruments related to professional reasoning. New findings include two professional reasoning modalities, five practice-related areas, and intervention programs that had not been previously described. Additionally, there has been an increase in the use of mixed methods. Conclusion: This scoping review identifies the nature and volume of literature on professional reasoning in recent years. The study reveals consolidated research lines focused on practice and teaching, alongside new findings and changes observed in recent studies.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1177/03080226241310724>

URL: <https://research.ebsco.com/plink/261510ca-fcce-3c22-95a8-d15f7c000a68>

6. Comparison of group and individual therapy in physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy: A systematic review

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Minor, Michael;Plath, Elisabeth;Volland, Carsten;Neusser, Silke and Bußmann, Anna



Publication Date:

Journal: Frontiers in Rehabilitation Sciences 7, pp. 1904321

Source: <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/rehabilitation-sciences/articles/10.3389/freesc.2026.1904321/abstract>

7. Evaluating the Efficacy of Occupational Therapy in Post-Rehabilitation: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Zhang, Wei and Wei, Lili

Publication Date:

Journal: Frontiers in Psychology 17, pp. 1772092

Source:

<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1772092/abstract>

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Professional Development/ Reports/News

Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) (2026) *OT Week 2026 resources*. Available at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/latest-news/ot-week-2026-resources> (Accessed: 15 September 2026).

World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) (2026) *WFOT Occupational Therapy International Practice Guide 2026*. Available at: <https://wfot.org/resources/wfot-occupational-therapy-international-practice-guide-2026> (Accessed: 15 September 2026).