**AOTA’s Evidence-Based Practice Resources**

**Using Evidence To Inform Occupational Therapy Practice**

Supporting the integration of practitioner expertise, client perspectives, and research evidence in the clinical decision-making process

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**What is evidence-based practice?**

With the demands of payers, regulators, and consumers to deliver effective and cost-efficient health services, “evidence-based practice” (EBP) has become the buzzword for high quality health care in the 21st century. EBP encourages the integration of critically appraised research results with the clinical expertise, and the client’s preferences, beliefs and values.

The EBP movement began in the late 1970s in response to the need for nationalized health care systems in Great Britain, Canada, and Australia to make decisions about the quality of services delivered and access to care. Additional momentum was added to the movement a decade later when the American health care system shifted towards care managed by effectiveness and cost-efficiency concerns, and less on provider preferences.

**What counts as “evidence”?**

The EBP process starts with developing a clinical question that emerges from a practice scenario, finding the relevant scientific studies and to critically appraise, and evaluating them for validity and applicability. Studies and sources that are selected as being of the highest level of rigor, quality and clinical relevance are recommended for use as “evidence” to inform practice, along with clinician experience and client values, beliefs and preferences.

**How can practitioners connect with the evidence?**

Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are eager to provide effective services that are client-centered, supported by evidence, and delivered in an efficient and cost effective manner. At the same time, many practitioners are challenged to understand how to first find literature relevant to addressing their clinical questions and then how to appraise the literature once it is found. Some practitioners either have not acquired critical appraisal skills, or are not confident in the quality of their critical appraisal skills. These factors, along with a lack of time and management support, and limited access to electronic databases, contribute to the need for practitioners to have easy-to-access evidence-based information to apply to their practices.

**What are AOTA’s EBP Resources?**

Since 1998, AOTA has developed a series of projects to assist members find and appraise clinically-relevant literature to respond to both their clients’ needs and to external demands for information from the scientific literature. In collaboration with a number of distinguished university faculty and practitioners, systematic reviews and appraisals of the literature have been completed to assist members in developing an evidence-based practice of occupational therapy.

The findings of the evidence-based literature reviews and the implications for practice are available on AOTA’s Web site in several formats.

**Using resources to inform practice, education and research**

AOTA’s resources provide members with an array of evidence-based information to:

- Guide clinical decision making—to support or to reconsider practice decisions
- Share with clients who want to participate in the clinical decision making process
- Discuss the value of occupational therapy interventions with external audiences, such as regulatory agencies, third-party payers, referral sources, or institution-based program managers
- Stimulate academic and continuing education programs, in-service programs, or journal clubs
- Share with students who are developing their critical appraisal skills
- Guide the development of clinical research projects

**The Evidence Brief Series**

Evidence Briefs are easy-to-read summaries of Level I and Level II studies of occupational therapy interventions related to specific health conditions and areas of practice:

- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Cerebral Palsy
- Older Adults
- Developmental Delay in Young Children
- Parkinson’s Disease
- Children with Behavioral and Psychosocial Needs
- School-Based Interventions
- Stroke
- Stroke: Focused Questions
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Substance-Use Disorders
- Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders
Critically Appraised Topics (CAT) and Critically Appraised Papers (CAP)

CAT: “At-a-glance” synthesis of findings, methods, study limitations, and practice implications of the group of articles selected for inclusion in focused question systematic reviews

CAP: “At-a-glance” summaries of findings and methods of selected individual articles from focused question systematic reviews of health conditions and areas of practice

Health Conditions and Areas of Practice

- Alzheimer’s Disease
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Driving and Community Mobility for Older Adults
- OT and Clinical Conditions Related to Worker’s Compensation
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Children and Adolescents with Sensory Processing Disorders/Sensory Integrative Dysfunction
- Persons With Serious Mental Illness

Occupational Therapy Practice Guideline Series

- Children With Behavioral and Psychosocial Needs
- Adults with Neurodegenerative Diseases
- Driving and Community Mobility for Older Adults
- Adults With Stroke
- Home Modifications
- Adults With Traumatic Brain Injury
- Children and Adolescents With Autism
- Individuals With Work-Related Injuries and Illness
- Adults With Alzheimer’s Disease (in process)

The EBP Resource Directory

The EBP Resource Directory is an online service that links users to Internet sites related to the evidence-based practice of occupational therapy. Sites include:

- Databases and Internet sites in occupational therapy (6 broad areas of practice), rehabilitation, and health outcomes
- Tutorials for acquiring basic and intermediate level skills to search and interpret the literature relevant to occupational therapy
- National and international evidence-oriented Internet sites posted by universities, government agencies, and private organizations

Evidence Byte

A feature in the 1 Minute Update designed to connect members with Internet sites, resources, and information related to the EBP of occupational therapy

CE on CD

Evidence-Based Review of Interventions Used in Occupational Therapy for Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder
Jane Case-Smith

Cochrane Collaboration

Since 2007, workshops at AOTA’s annual conference have been sponsored in collaboration with representatives of the U.S. Cochrane Center on topics related to evidence-based practice. Workshop topics include finding, synthesizing, and applying clinical evidence, and developing a systematic review for publication.

Evidence Perks

A quarterly column in OT Practice designed to address the day-to-day needs of OT practitioners to find and use the best available evidence to inform clinical decisions

- “Using The Internet to Find Evidence to Inform Your Practice”
  Jessica Scheer, Marian Arbesman, and Deborah Lieberman (October 23, 2006)
- “New Web Portal to International Evidence-Based Practice Resources”
  Jessica Scheer, with Marian Arbesman and Deborah Lieberman (May 14, 2007)
- “Using Institute of Medicine Reports to Inform Practice”
  Jessica Scheer (July 9, 2007)
- “Using the National Library Of Medicine’s Web Resources”
  Jessica Scheer (September 10, 2007)
- “AARP’s Online Research Databases”
  Jessica Scheer (October 8, 2007)
- “The Institute for Work And Health: Evidence for OT”
  Jessica Scheer (December 24, 2007)
- “Mental Health Evidence-Based Programs and Practices on The Web”
  Jessica Scheer, Marian Arbesman, and Deborah Lieberman (February 4, 2008)
- “Keeping Current: Using Journal Tables of Contents to Locate Evidence”
  Marian Arbesman, Deborah Lieberman, and Jessica Scheer (May 26, 2008)
- “Evidence-Based Practice Resource Directory – Updated and Improved”
  Madeline Maglio, Marian Arbesman, and Deborah Lieberman (September 8, 2008)
- “Free Access to Evidence-Based Resources on the Web”
  Marian Arbesman and Deborah Lieberman (December 15, 2008)
- “Digging Deeper: Finding Targeted Evidence for Your Clinical Area”
  Marian Arbesman and Deborah Lieberman (February 23, 2009)
- Evidence-Based Practice Resources: Children and Youth
  Marian Arbesman and Deborah Lieberman (April 20, 2009)
Feature Articles in OT Practice

- “AOTA Offers Evidence-Based Reviews”
  Deborah Lieberman, Jessica Scheer, and Kashala Erby
  (February 10, 2003)
- “Using AOTA Evidence-Based Resources to Enter Pediatric Practice in the Context of Public Schools”
  Jean E. Polichino and Jessica Scheer (August 28, 2006)
- CE article: “Using AOTA Evidence-Based Practice Resources”
  Marian Arbesman and Deborah Lieberman
  (November 27, 2006) [Errata] Available online at http://www.aota.org/Practitioners/ProfDev/CE/Aota/Articles/39629.aspx
- “Stroke Recovery and OT: Finding and Using the Evidence to Inform Practice”
  Jessica Scheer, with Marian Arbesman and Deborah Lieberman (March 19, 2007)
- Using AOTA's Critically Appraised Topic (CAT) and Critically Appraised Paper (CAP) Series to Link Evidence to Practice”
  Marian Arbesman, Jessica Scheer, and Deborah Lieberman (March 31, 2008)
- “Using Findings from Qualitative Studies as Evidence to Inform Practice: An Update”
  Jessica Scheer, Marian Arbesman, and Deborah Lieberman (June 16, 2008)

American Journal of Occupational Therapy

- “AOTA's Evidence-Based Literature Review Project: An Overview”
  Deborah Lieberman and Jessica Scheer (May/June 2002)
- “Background and Methodology of the Older Driver Evidence-Based Systematic Literature Review”
  Wendy B. Stav, Marian Arbesman, and Deborah Lieberman (March/April 2008)
- “An Evidence-Based and Occupational Perspective of Effective Interventions for Older Clients That Mediate or Support Improved Driving Performance”
  Linda A. Hunt and Marian Arbesman (March/April 2008)
- “A Review of the Evidence Related to Older Adult Community Mobility and Driver Licensure Policies”
  Wendy B. Stav (March/April 2008)
- “Critical Review and Analysis of the Impact of the Physical Infrastructure on the Driving Ability, Performance, and Safety of Older Adults”
  Paula Christine Bohr (March/April 2008)
- “An Evidence-Based Perspective on the Effect of Automobile Related Modifications on the Driving Ability, Performance, and Safety of Older Adults”
  Marian Arbesman and Joseph M. Pellerito, Jr. (March/April 2008)
- Evidence Based Review of Interventions for Autism Used in or of Relevance to Occupational Therapy”
  Jane Case-Smith and Marian Arbesman (July/August 2008)

SIS (Special Interest Section) Quarterly Newsletters

- “Finding Evidence for the Effectiveness of Occupational Therapy Interventions”
  Jessica Scheer and Ann O'Sullivan (Home and Community SIS Quarterly, December 2007)
- “Mrs. Porter’s Story: Using Evidence To Inform Clinical Decisions”
  Katherine M. Post, Joan Simmons, and Jessica Scheer (Technology SIS Quarterly, June 2008)
- “Educating for Cultural Competence: An Evidence-Based Approach”
  Jessica Scheer and Pamalyn Kearney (Education SIS Quarterly, September 2008)
- “Using Evidence to Inform Practice for Urinary Incontinence”
  Natalie Wiatrowski, Linda Riccio, and Jessica Scheer (Gerontology SIS Quarterly, December 2008)
- “Finding and Using Evidence to Inform Practice for Persons with Work-Related Hand Injuries”
  Debbie Amini, Marian Arbesman, and Deborah Lieberman (Work and Industry SIS Quarterly, March 2009)

For more information about the Evidence-Based Practice Project, contact the American Occupational Therapy Association 301-652-6611, x 2052.

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