AGEING/GERONTOLOGY

P-001
ECOLOGICAL VALIDITY OF STANDARDISED FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENTS OF COGNITION AFTER BRAIN INJURY IN AN ACUTE SETTING

Emma Hay5, Katelyn Moloney5, Michelle Farquhar2, Eloise Thompson2, Jacqui Morarity1, Natasha Lannin1,2, Lisa O’Brien1,3
1 Alfred Health, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 2 La Trobe University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3 Monash University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Introduction: Cognitive dysfunction is common in older adults after traumatic brain injury. Appropriate assessment of the many complex interrelated cognitive functions is critical, yet age-related cognitive changes in elderly trauma patients present a challenge to traditional pen-and-paper assessments. Ecological validity has become an increasingly important focus in cognitive assessment, in which it is important to assess the person’s cognitive and behavioural capacities with real-world demands and environments.

Objectives: To describe the adaptation of two functional assessments of cognition, which were originally developed for administration in the community, into an acute setting.

Method: The clinical utility and ecological validity of two standardised functional assessments, The Kettle Test and the Functional Cognitive Assessment Scale (FUCAS), were assessed using specific criteria. The adaptation process, including barriers to administration in an acute hospital setting, was documented and key challenges addressed.

Results: With assumptions regarding the familiarity of an environment being central to functional assessments of cognition, ensuring ecological validity in an acute hospital environment is challenging. Both The Kettle Test and FUCAS could be adapted, although hospital protocols and environmental limitations have impacted on the ability to carry out specific subtests of both assessments.

Conclusion: Whilst there is evidence to support the use of standardised functional assessments of cognition, it must be acknowledged that the ecological validity of tests may be reduced as a result of adaptation to the acute hospital setting.

CANCER/PALLIATIVE CARE

P-002
CLINICAL ASSESSMENT OF CANCER-RELATED FATIGUE: CURRENT PRACTICE IN AUSTRALIA

Elizabeth Pearson1, Carol McKinstry2, Marilyn Di Stefano1,3, Meg E. Morris1
1 La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia 2 Vic Roads, Victoria, Australia

Introduction: Cancer-related fatigue (CRF) is a common and distressing problem during and after treatment for cancer. Fatigue can restrict participation in self-care, social, work and leisure occupations. Guidelines published regarding screening, assessment and management of CRF are available; however limited research investigating clinical application of these guidelines has been undertaken.

Objectives: This research aims to describe how Australian health practitioners assess CRF and to compare this to current international guidelines.

Methods: A cross-sectional on-line survey of Australian health professionals working with people with a cancer diagnosis collected data on CRF assessment in clinical practice. Six cancer and health professional associations emailed the survey link to health professionals. Quantitative data was statistically analysed and qualitative data analysed using axial coding.

Results: The 129 respondents included 92 allied health practitioners across five Australian states. Location of practice was predominantly metropolitan areas (73%) and 40% worked in acute hospital settings. There was a wide variation between services in screening for CRF, prioritisation, response and assessment of people referred with CRF. In 79% of services guidelines for assessment were not used. Participants reported a lack of clear guidelines, awareness, resources and access to services as barriers to treating CRF.

Conclusion: A limitation in standardized assessment tools and variations in service delivery compromises rehabilitation for people with CRF. Further research into feasibility and validity of management guidelines for CRF is warranted.

CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE ISSUES

P-003
SUPERVISION, PEER SUPPORT AND MENTORING AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND THE SENSE OF BELONGING

Amanda Bladen
Occupational Therapy Australia, Victoria, Australia

Introduction: Supervision, mentoring and peer support can provide challenges and rewards, be confronting and frustrating; at times because of this OTs give them a low priority-but well directed efforts bring protection and benefits to individual clients and client groups as a whole, and also have a positive impact on professional identity and resilience.

Aim: This presentation explores practice based evidence and evidence based practice around the benefits to clients and to occupational therapists-of structured conversations around practice. Along with evidence supporting the need for an individually tailored career long approach- with themes around the need and right to access flexible, occupation focussed support -concepts of the importance of belonging to and identifying with the profession through supervision, mentoring and peer support will be explored.

Methods: The author has used literature review, focus groups, personal peer support and professional practice reflection.

Conclusion: Supervision, peer support and mentoring are vital in professional identity, good practice and the sense of belonging to the occupational therapy profession.

P-004
EAST MEETS WEST NETWORK – A MODEL FOR SUPPORT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Kalda Bourne, Anita Major-Brown
Private Practice, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Staying in contact with OT networks and maintaining PD has always been a challenge whilst working part time or in non – OT or non-paid work. A group of 10 O.T.’s who live east or west of the Yarra river and whose ages span 3 decades and who work in such diverse areas as private practice, aged care, management, non-traditional OT role, ABI and ‘career breaks’ were spurred on to form this group just prior to National registration commencing. Their challenge was to find a way to meet some of the PD requirements of registration and expand on their OT skills and development.

The group meets one evening every second month at locations on both sides of the Yarra and group members volunteer to lead with a learning opportunity. Examples of topics already addressed:

- A podcast on ageing
- Presentation on dementia, prepared for a work-place in-service training
- Presentation of a relevant Master’s thesis
- Case study and peer review

Members attribute group effectiveness to:

- Diversity of the group’s professional and clinical experience
- Willingness to share knowledge and teach others
- Capacity to provide relevant and constructive feedback/peer review
- Occurs at a pace, time and place that suits families
- Provides valuable face-to-face time with colleagues

We envisage that this model is easy to replicate and are happy to support and resource colleagues in setting up such a group.