Assessments used by Occupational Therapy Practitioners to Evaluate Sleep with their Clients
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Sleep is a growing concern and greatly affects all areas of a person’s occupations. Deficits in sleep have been linked to multiple health related ailments, a decrease in life expectancy and have contributed to the rising healthcare cost in America. The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) placed increased emphasis on rest and sleep in the 2008 revision of the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (OTPF). The aims of this pilot study were to investigate Occupational Therapy Practitioners (OTP): inquiry of sleep among their clients, assessments used to evaluate clients sleep, knowledge on recent changes in the occupational therapy (OT) profession in regards to sleep, and the potential need for the formulation of an occupation-based sleep assessment specifically for use by OTP. A mixed method design via a semi structured 10- question survey was used for this investigation. Twenty One (n=21) participants between the ages of 20 and 70 of all genders, races and ethnicities participated in the study. The participants were 17 (n-17) OTP who held both Certification through the National Board of Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) and licensure through their state of practice, 3(n-3) who held state licensure and one (n-1) who held certification. The information obtained was analyzed for the frequency, methods, sentiments, reasons, and needs of the OTP in regards to their evaluation of sleep. The results of this study found that over 50% of OTP are addressing sleep in practice and are inquiring about sleep in over 50% of their clients. Seventy-five percent of the OTP use informal inquiry to obtain information on their clients sleep and do not use standardized sleep assessments. The importance of sleep for clients was given a mean score of 8 by the OTP and 95% of OTP participants reported that there is a need for the formulation of an occupation based sleep assessment specifically formulated for OTP evaluation of sleep.

The study concluded: that sleep is not being addressed or properly evaluated in a substantial proportion of clients, standardized sleep evaluation tools are not being used by OTP, the majority of OTP are unaware of pertinent changes in the occupational therapy profession in regards to sleep, and that there is need for a standardized assessment tool specifically formulated for OTP evaluation of sleep and its effects on clients’ overall occupations and quality of life.
References


