

# Profile of Pediatric Occupational Therapy Practice in Kuwait: A Qualitative Study

Asmaa Alenezi<sup>1\*</sup>, Sara Alsairafi<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>School of Medicine, the University of Jordan, Amman 11942, Jordan<sup>2</sup>Department of Pediatrics, Ministry of Health, Kuwait City 12009, KuwaitDOI: [10.36347/sjams.2022.v10i07.016](https://doi.org/10.36347/sjams.2022.v10i07.016)

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\*Corresponding author: Asmaa Alenezi

School of Medicine, the University of Jordan, Amman 11942, Jordan

## Abstract

## Original Research Article

Pediatrics specialty is the most occupational therapy practice in Kuwait. Therefore, the purpose of this survey is to establish a profile of pediatric occupational therapy practice in Kuwait. Moreover, it aims to recognize the most common diagnoses that are referred to the pediatrics occupational therapy in Kuwait as well as identify the most common assessments, frame of reference, and intervention techniques that are used in the area of practice. In addition, there are also many studies conducted about pediatric occupational therapy profiles in Australia, Canada, and United States. However, there are no studies about pediatric occupational therapy profiles in Kuwait (Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 2005). Therefore, the importance of this research is to follow a successful role model similar to Canada, Australia, and the United States. The Methodology was an ex post facto survey that is adapted to conduct the data. The sample is all pediatric occupational therapists working in both Ministry of Health and the private educational sector in Kuwait receive the survey. The sample size was 260 therapists but the responding participants were 217 therapists. The result showed that the most commonly used assessments were the Developmental Test of Visual Motor Integration, Peabody Developmental Motor Scales, Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency, and the Sensory Profile.

**Keywords:** Pediatrics specialty, survey, Practice.

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## INTRODUCTION

Occupational therapy in pediatrics focus on treating children with various disabilities to reduce limitations and enhance independence, personal growth, and normal development, improving quality of life by applying a holistic and client-family-centered approach (Mulligan, 2003). There were mixed method researches study were conducted to investigate the most regularly selected assessment tools by pediatric occupational therapists and the resultant effects on service delivery specific to goal writing, intervention planning, length of treatment, and materials used in practice to deliver appropriate and sufficient intervention for pediatric patients (Skuthan, 2021). Occupational therapy was established in Kuwait in the 1980s. The Occupational Therapy Department in the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Kuwait University, accepted its first intake of students in September 2009. In addition, it is the first Occupational Therapy degree program in the Gulf and the second in the Middle East.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Application of theories, assessments, and interventions by pediatric occupational therapists*

Sylvia Rodger, Ted Brown, and Antia Brown (2005) conducted a study to establish a profile of pediatric occupational therapy in Australia. This study aimed to describe the most common theories, assessments, and interventions used with the most frequently seen client groups. An ex post facto survey design was sent to 600 occupational therapists by e-mail. Respondents reported that theoretical models used focused on sensory integration, occupational performance, and client-centered practice. In addition, the test of Visual Motor Integration, Sensory Profile, Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency, Handwriting Speech Test, and Motor-Free Visual Perception Test were the most frequently used assessment tools. Moreover, developmental delay, learning disabilities, and neurological impairments were the most frequently seen patients in Australian pediatric occupational therapy practice.

Rodger, Brown & Brown (2007) described a profile of Canadian pediatric occupational therapy practice considering theories/practice models, assessments, and interventions. A purpose-designed survey was applied on 272 members of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. The results showed that the most commonly used assessments were the Developmental Test of Visual Motor Integration, Peabody Developmental Motor Scales, Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency, and Sensory Profile.

#### ***Assessments and clinical reasoning used by pediatric occupational therapists***

Bagatell, Hartmann, and Meriano (2012) surveyed 370 therapists and interviewed 10 therapists to describe the assessment methods and the clinical reasoning used by pediatric occupational therapists. The findings of the study were that the assessments that focus on body structure and function and relatively few clients- and occupation-centered assessments were the most frequently used by the therapists.

#### ***Pediatric occupational therapy assessments***

In a study by Diamantis (2006), 89 therapists in the United Kingdom received a survey to investigate the assessment methods used by occupational therapists working with children in independent practice. The study showed that the most common assessments were the Movement Assessment Battery for Children (79%) and the Developmental Test of visual-motor Integration (74%).

#### ***Application of occupational therapy theories in school-based practice***

Stroch, B. & Eskow, K. (1996) sent a questionnaire to 72 occupational therapists working in school-based practice to explore the frames of reference they used and the reason for using it. The study found that the most frequent frames of reference used were sensory integration theory and neuro-developmental theory.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Respondents were 217 members of occupational therapists who indicated that pediatrics was their primary area of clinical practice. An ex post facto survey was adapted and utilized and then sent to participants.

#### **Subject and sample size**

All pediatric occupational therapists working in both Ministry of Health and the private educational sector in Kuwait received the survey. The survey was sent to 260 occupational therapists and 217 therapists responded which were approximately 83.5% (n=217/260).

#### **Instrumentation**

The survey was applied in a previous study by Sylvia Rodger, Ted Brown, and Antia Brown (2005), and contains multiple-choice and self-report format questions. This survey will be adapted in terms of adding years of experience and school that the therapists graduated from. Five Areas are addressed in the survey, including (1) demographics of the participants; (2) caseload and client group; (3) theoretical model used; (4) assessment and evaluation measures and (5) intervention methods. Because this questionnaire was purpose designed for the present study, no further information on its validity and reliability is available.

#### **Procedures**

Ethical approval will be obtained from the Ministry Of Health and the private educational sector, in Kuwait. In addition, informed consent will be obtained from the therapist. Then, Survey techniques will be delivering a cover letter with the survey to each of all pediatric occupational therapists, followed by a reminder letter 2 weeks later. The cover letter will include the purpose of the study. Therapists voluntarily participate in the study and anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed.

#### **Data analysis**

The study design is Descriptive. The data and information that are collected from the sample will be entered into Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programs to convert data into readable figures and numbers.

## **RESULT**

The result showed that the response rate was adequate at 83.5% (n = 217/260). The primary client groups seen by pediatric therapists were a developmental delay, learning disability, neurology, and those requiring rehabilitation. Sensory Integration and Client-Centered Practice were the most frequently utilized theories/practice models. The most commonly used assessments were the Developmental Test of Visual Motor Integration, Peabody Developmental Motor Scales, Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency, and the Sensory Profile. The most frequently used intervention techniques with pediatric clients were the instruction of parents-caregivers and children; assistive devices, adaptive equipment, and technology; activities of daily living/self-care skills; and environmental modification.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Pediatric occupational therapists mostly used practice models that focused on three areas: Client-Centered practice, practice-oriented theories, and several theories-practice models based on occupation. Interventions focused on teaching are activities unique

to occupational therapy which cover the functional needs of patients.

### Implication of the Study

The current study is the first study that describes the pediatric occupational therapy profile in Kuwait in terms of the most common diagnoses, frames of reference, assessments, and intervention techniques that follow a successful role model similar to Canada, Australia, and the United States. Moreover, it will be compared and contrasted with other Western countries in which occupational therapy was established. Therefore, this study will improve pediatric occupational therapy services in Kuwait.

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