

Concussion Management: OT Perspectives

EBP II: Qualitative Research
Pacific University

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Concussion & Concussion Management

- Growing public health concern
- Emerging practice area/niche for OT
- Symptoms impact daily functioning
- Lack of research
- Uncertainty on how best to treat and recover
- Evidence-based rehabilitation practices require standardization

Scholarly Question

What are the perceptions of occupational therapists from four different settings (school-based, acute care, outpatient, and inpatient rehab), regarding the quality of their training in, and preparedness to treat, clients recovering from concussion?

Literature Review

- **Focus:** mTBI rehab education and training
 - OT and patient lived experiences
- **Search terms:** concussion education, qualitative research, and occupational therapy treating concussions
- 12 articles, from the last 10 years
- **Headings:**
 - Lived Experience of Patients
 - Lived Experience of Practitioners
 - Roles and Responsibilities of OT Practitioners
 - Current Settings for OT Concussion Management
 - Gaps in Literature
 - Implications for Future

Qualitative Research: Variable Definitions and Research Plan

- **Independent Variables**: OT experience, job training, and current practice setting
- **Dependent Variable**: OT perceptions of satisfaction, competence, and preparedness in treating clients with concussions
- **Extraneous Variables**: Years of experience, personal interest, any education or continuing education experiences regarding concussion
- **Plan**: Interview 4 OTR/Ls; 15 - 20 minutes
- **Theoretical base**: CMOP-E
- **Approach**: Transcendental phenomenology
- **Bias**: Bracketing

Research Participants

- Convenience and purposeful sampling
- One of four chosen settings
- <5 years experience
- Registered, practicing occupational therapy practitioners
- Greater Portland area
- Ethical protocol – confidentiality

The Interview

- 1) Tell me your experiences learning about concussions in your graduate OT program?
- 2) Tell me your experiences being trained in concussion treatment at your current job?
- 3) Tell me how you feel about treating people with concussions (in terms of confidence, competence, and preparedness)?
- 4) Talk about any aspect of concussion education and treatment in which you feel you could benefit from more support or training in, if any?

QUESTIONS

Open-ended

Semi-structured

11 predetermined

Appropriate follow-ups/probing as necessary

FIELD NOTES

Subjective observations on context, environment, body language, facial expression, tone of voice, and other nonverbal cues.

Data

Four recorded semi-structured interviews

- Field notes collected

Manually transcribed and coded

- Two passes at coding per interview by respective researcher
- Exchanged transcriptions and colleague coded
- Taxonomy

Generalizability

- Not fully prioritized

Trustworthiness

- Reflexivity and peer debriefing

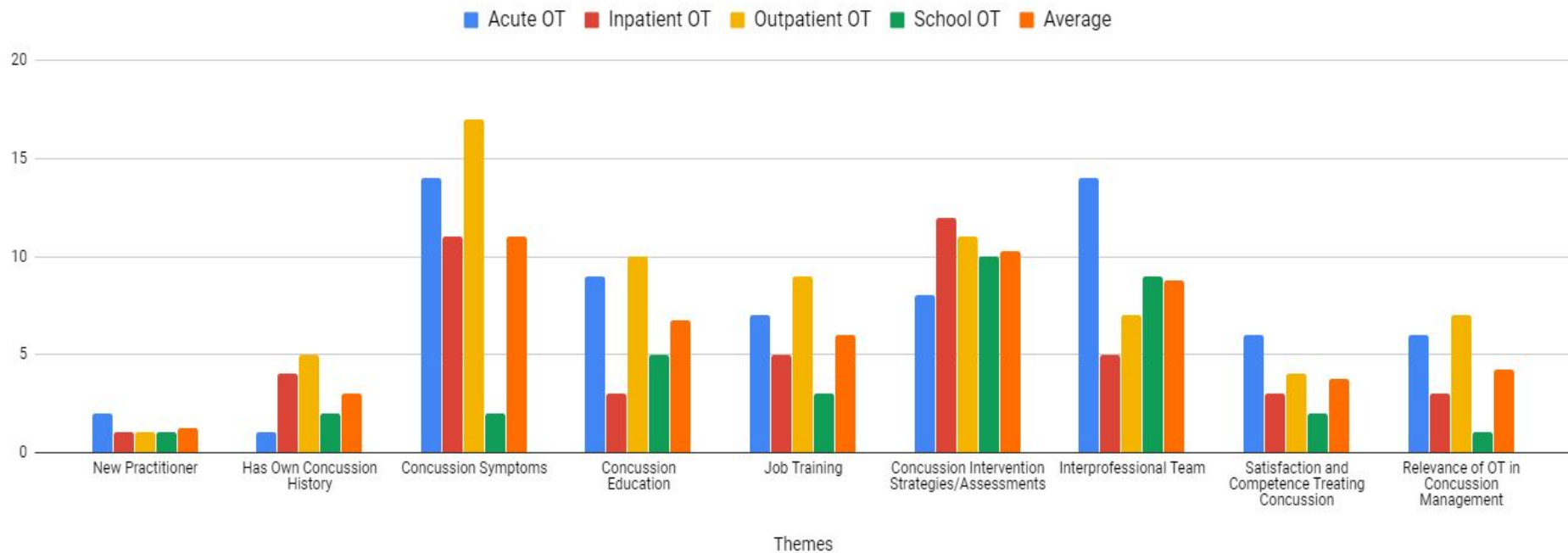
Limitations

- Time
- Self-report
- Student researchers
- Geographical preference

Coding for Common Themes:

Examples	Outpatient OT	Inpatient Rehab OT	Acute OT	School OT
Call for Further Concussion Education/Training	<p>“...a lot of occupational therapists don’t have [concussion] training...”</p> <p>“There is a need not only in OT education but also in medical students’ education...”</p>	<p>“...I don’t remember actually learning about it.”</p> <p>“...the problem is, I mean it always comes down to education...”</p>	<p>“...not something I got a whole lot of education on in school.”</p>	<p>“[On the job training] is not something I even considered, and it’s definitely not protocol here.”</p>
Satisfaction and Competence Levels in Treating Concussions	<p>“I feel pretty confident treating most patients...”</p>	<p>“...off the top of my head I wouldn’t know the ins and outs.”</p>	<p>“...gained a lot of confidence working with patients...”</p> <p>“Competence I would also say is pretty high...”</p>	<p>“...I wouldn’t feel comfortable...delegating and giving recommendations...”</p>
Interprofessional Support in Concussion Management	<p>“...you get a lot of support from your other therapists...”</p>	<p>“...I learn from my coworkers all the time...”</p>	<p>“...our cognitive brains can work together for a situation for a patient.”</p>	<p>“...being able to collaborate with everyone else makes me feel more competent...”</p>

Theme Frequency Across Settings



Results

Acute and outpatient settings reported high percentage of time working with concussion patients

Practitioners believe OT should be more involved in concussion management practices

Call for more concussion education and on-the-job training

Practitioners in different settings expressed varying levels of satisfaction and competence in treating concussion

There is awareness of common symptoms and agreement that they significantly impact daily functioning

The more experience, education, and training, the more confident the practitioner

Need for more standardized assessments and treatment protocols

Interdisciplinary team is critical

Significance

- No foundation for concussion competence stemming from education
- Acknowledged value of OT for concussion management
 - Yet lack of confidence inhibits
- Illustrates gap in OT practice
- Impetus to emphasize concussion training and education
- Push to research concussion treatment protocols further and develop standardization practices for best recovery

Next Steps

- Qualitative Research
 - Patient perceptions of OT effectiveness in concussion treatment
 - Attitudes of other health professionals towards OT role in concussion management
- Development of effective and standardized concussion education and training for all healthcare practitioners, including occupational therapy practitioners