Wheelchair and seating assessment and prescription – developing the skills set through appropriate education and training solutions

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Outline

- Background – the importance of getting it right
- Background – OT education & training
- Aims & Objectives
- Methods
- Participants
- Data Collection & Analysis
- Results
- Limitations & Further Study
- Conclusion
**Background** – the importance of getting it right

- Postural support, comfort, safety
- Independent living and full participation
- Basic human rights (*United Nations 2008*)
- Low levels and barriers to social participation (*Disability and Social Inclusion in Ireland, Gannon 2004*)
- The assessment procedure is complex
- Consequences of inappropriate prescription

**Background** – OT education & training

- Occupational therapists a core provider - in need of specialist training and in-depth knowledge
- Training benefits occupational therapists (*White 2003*)
- The need for education and training is recognised by many significant global organisations (*WHO 2008, UN 2008, AAATE 2003, Motivation 2013*)
- A dearth of education and training programmes available in the Republic of Ireland
**Aims & Objectives**

- To evaluate Enable Ireland's, SeatTech Assessment & Solutions (SAS) two tiered programme

- To gather the views of participants on the current lack of education and training available in Ireland

- To discuss the results and their implication towards supporting a move towards mandatory education programmes for all relevant parties in the future

**Methods**

- Quantitative strategies - survey

- 4 subsections (25 questions): Demographics, Course Satisfaction, Transferable Skills and Future Training Needs

- Majority closed questions, mostly provided likert scales for responses;

**The SeatTech Assessment and Solutions course content suited my needs.**

- Definitely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Definitely disagree
Participants

- Administered to 101 participants who attended SeatTech Assessment & Solutions (SAS) training programmes Level 1 & Level 2

- Participants had attended SAS training programmes between the years 2007 and 2011

- These were the total number of participants whose contact details, in the form of email addresses were available to SAS

Data Collection & Analysis

- SurveyMonkey (SM)

- Quantitative results - descriptive statistics or graphed information

- Qualitative responses - content analysis methodology

- Ethical Considerations
Results – Demographics

- 30% response rate (29 returned questionnaires)
- 83% (n=24) occupational therapists, 14% (n = 4) physiotherapists, 4% (n=1) clinical engineer
- Participants work in a broad variety of settings with a range of experience (< 3 to 10+ years)

**Level of experience compared with years of practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Complex</th>
<th>Specialist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 3 yrs</td>
<td>40 (2)</td>
<td>39 (5)</td>
<td>27 (3)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-5 yrs</td>
<td>20 (1)</td>
<td>23 (3)</td>
<td>9 (1)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-10 yrs</td>
<td>20 (1)</td>
<td>31 (4)</td>
<td>46 (5)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; 10 yrs</td>
<td>20 (1)</td>
<td>8 (1)</td>
<td>18 (2)</td>
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Results – Demographics (cont)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time per week</th>
<th>Occupational Therapists</th>
<th>Physiotherapists</th>
<th>Clinical Engineer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 hours</td>
<td>50 (12)</td>
<td>100 (4)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-10 hours</td>
<td>29 (7)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15 hours</td>
<td>8 (2)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15+ hours</td>
<td>13 (3)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>100 (1)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Experience</th>
<th>Occupational Therapists</th>
<th>Physiotherapists</th>
<th>Clinical Engineer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>21 (5)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>46 (11)</td>
<td>50 (2)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>33 (8)</td>
<td>50 (2)</td>
<td>100 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialists</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results – Demographics (cont)

- 68% (n=17) Supplier/manufacturer run courses
- 28% (n=7) Professional qualification
- 16% (n=4) Postgraduate education

Results – Programme Satisfaction

- 97% (n = 28) signified a level of overall satisfaction with training programmes attended
- 97% (n = 28) signified a level of satisfaction with delivery style of programmes attended
- 100% (n = 29) signified that the course content suited their needs to some degree
Results – Programme Satisfaction (cont)

Course Improvement

Information  Time  Teaching Methods

Results – Transferable Skills

- **100% (n=29)** identified SAS training provided them with an opportunity to develop new skills
- **86% (n = 24)** feel it extended their overall knowledge in the area of provision
- **93% (n = 27)** identified training has helped them in meeting individual user's needs
- **73% (n=21)** have shared their knowledge gained from training with other service providers
- **86% (n=25)** found that the training has stimulated further interest for them in the area
Results – Future Training Needs

- Development of SAS training programmes

- 96% (n = 27) feel that there generally is a need for more training and education in the Republic of Ireland

- Participant's suggestions on what is needed for future planning:

<table>
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<th>Suggestion</th>
<th>n</th>
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<td>Accredited training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third level education</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>More frequent courses countrywide</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>More cost-effective training courses</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities for practical experience</td>
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Limitations & Further Study

- Small sample size

- Representation across different professions

- A platform for potential follow-up research methods

- The impact that this training has on wheelchair and seating users would also compliment this study
Conclusion

- Wheelchair and seating provision is a complex process and this study shows that SAS training provides participants with appropriate knowledge and skills in the area, benefitting both personal and professional development.

- SAS training enables providers to meet individual user needs. This promotes the health and well-being of user’s by enabling independence and full and effective participation, a basic human right.

- Occupational therapists are the primary service prescribers in wheelchair and seating in the Republic of Ireland and this study reveals the concerning state of their skill set.

- This study correlates the benefits of wheelchair and seating training with an overwhelming urgency and demand for development in the area.

- It supports a move towards mandatory education programmes for all relevant parties in the future and provides participant suggestions in order to inform this development.
References


University of Limerick (2012) [Occupational Therapy [online], available: http://www2.ul.ie/web/WWW/Faculties/Education_A_Health_Sciences/Departments/Occupational_Therapy/Programmes/MSc_in_Occupational_Therapy_%28Professional_Qualification%29 [accessed 12 Apr 2012].


