

Students' and Clinical Supervisors' Experiences of Occupational Therapy Practice Education: A Structured Critical Review

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Abstract : Introduction: Practice education is a key component of occupational therapy education. This critical review aimed to explore students' and clinical supervisors' experiences of practice education, and to make recommendations for research. Method: The literature was systematically searched using five databases. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods studies were included. Critical Appraisal Skills Programme checklist for qualitative studies and Mixed Methods Assessment Tool for quantitative and mixed methods studies were used to assess study quality. Findings: Twenty-two studies with high quality scores were included: 16 qualitative, 3 quantitative and 3 mixed methods. Studies were conducted in Australia, Canada, USA and UK. During practice education, students learned professional skills, practical skills, clinical skills and problem-solving skills, and improved confidence and creativity. Supervisors had an opportunity to reflect on their practice and get experience of supervising students. However, clear objectives and expectations for students, and sufficient theoretical knowledge, preparation and resources for supervisors were required. Conclusion: Practice education provides different skills and experiences, necessary to become competent professionals; but some areas of practice education need to improve. Studies in non-western countries are needed to explore the perspectives of students and clinical supervisors in different cultures, to ensure the practice education models adopted are relevant.

Keywords : occupational therapy, practice education, fieldwork, students, clinical supervisors

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