

Rehabilitation

Current Awareness Bulletin

June 2026

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- **Bitesize searching databases for evidence: a quick guide to help you develop your literature searching skills**
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- **Simple and painless evidence into practice (BMJ Best Practice and the LKS Hub)**
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- **Quickfire health literacy: communicating with patients more effectively**
30 minutes. Learn about the communication barriers patients may encounter, and ways to ensure they get the most from their care.
Next sessions: 30th July @ 12 noon and 7th August @ 1pm

Book a session today at <https://forms.office.com/e/HyiSXfDaYV> (these sessions will be held on a monthly basis)

New / Updated Guidance from NICE

Digital technologies for managing non-specific low back pain: early value assessment

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE); 2026.
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/htg712/chapter/Update-information> [HealthTech guidance HTG712.
Last updated 30 April 2026

Voice therapy app improving outcomes for Parkinson's patients at University Hospitals of Derby and Burton

HTN Health Tech News, 23 April 2026

University Hospitals of Derby and Burton reports improved outcomes for Parkinson's patients using a voice therapy app delivered through its speech therapy team

OTs and prescribing rights. Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT); 2026.

[Independent prescribing rights are essential for advancing occupational therapy practice and improving outcomes for the people and communities they serve. Extending prescribing rights to a wider range of healthcare professionals, including occupational therapists, can bring major benefits to patient care and professional practice in certain roles.]

BBC Sussex: The NHS teams aiming to prevent hospital discharge delays - NHS Surrey and Sussex's community therapy team is providing a crucial role in solving the problem of delayed discharges. It does this by preventing unnecessary hospital admissions, getting patients strong and ready for surgery, supporting timely recovery, and helping patients maintain their independence.

1. The Menu Task in Occupational Therapy: A Qualitative Study of Practitioners' Perspectives

Authors: Capasso, Nettie and Skuthan, Alysha

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: OTJR : Occupation, Participation and Health 46(3), pp. 464–472

Abstract: Occupational therapy practice addressing functional cognition reduces hospital readmission rates. But no widely accepted performance-based functional cognition screen exists for inpatient rehabilitation. The aim was to determine how occupational therapy practitioners perceive the Menu Task's (MT's) utility for addressing functional cognition impairment. This study is a qualitative interpretive constructionist design with a phenomenological approach using semi-structured interviews with nine inpatient rehabilitation occupational therapy practitioners. Three themes emerged: (a) the screen's focus on ability, highlighting what the patient can do; (b) convenient administration, emphasizing the screen's ease of use; and (c) room to grow, focusing on areas for screen improvement. The Menu Task is convenient to administer and informs occupational therapy practice by revealing functional cognition ability. Although needing improvement, the Menu Task aligns with occupational therapy practice tenets by highlighting occupational participation. Occupational therapy practitioners indicated that inclusion of the Menu Task enhanced their clinical practice in inpatient rehabilitation, addressing functional cognition.

2. Clinician Scientists in Occupational Therapy: Bridging the Knowledge-to-Practice Gap

Authors: Edelstein, Jessica;Harpster, Karen;Robins, Laura Lee;Tanner, Kelly;Yelvington, Miranda and Reynolds, Stacey

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: The American Journal of Occupational Therapy : Official Publication of the American Occupational Therapy Association 80(4)

Abstract: Occupational therapy research continues to expand in breadth and rigor, yet significant gaps persist between what is known and what is done in practice. Across health care, only about 14% of research is ever adopted into practice, and on average, it takes 17 yr for scientific discoveries to be implemented (Hanney et al., 2015; Kowalski et al., 2022; Morris et al., 2011; Munro & Savel, 2016). Therefore, the ability of scientific discoveries to improve patient outcomes will remain limited unless health care professions and researchers can overcome this knowledge-to-practice gap (Bennett et al., 2018). Addressing this gap will require new models that more intentionally integrate research expertise within clinical practice. (Copyright © 2026 by the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.)

3. Identifying Occupational Therapists' Perspectives on Their Unique Role in Pelvic Health Care

Authors: Fyhrie, Jennifer H.;Le Fevre, Eleanor;Fruhauf, Christine A.;Weaver, Jennifer A. and Schmid, Arlene A.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: OTJR : Occupation, Participation and Health 46(3), pp. 501–509

Abstract: Occupational therapists' (OTs') role in addressing pelvic floor dysfunction (PFD) is documented, yet their perception of their unique contribution has not been well explored. The purpose of this study is to elucidate OTs' perspectives about their therapeutic approach in PFD. This exploratory, qualitative descriptive study included an online demographic survey to purposively recruit and screen OTs. Thirteen one-on-one semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. We used an in-vivo coding approach, categorized codes with similar concepts, and generated themes. Participants' stories mostly reflected clinical scenarios with adult female clients. Two themes describe how OTs believe their role in PFD is unique: (a) OTs use a whole-person approach which considers mental, physical, and environmental impacts on functioning and (b) OTs use occupation-focused interventions to empower clients to manage their own health. OTs' holistic and psychosocial-focused approaches may complement existing biomechanical techniques. The inclusion of OTs into

multidisciplinary teams may positively impact client outcomes.

4. Pelvic health physiotherapists' knowledge of and confidence working with the LGBTQIA+ community: a qualitative survey

Authors: Kilroy, Anneka;McKenna, Rachel;Huang, Lixia;Harrold, Meg;Kenagy, Sarah and Ross, Megan H.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Sexual Health 23(3)

Abstract: Background: Inclusive pelvic health care for people with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and other diverse bodies, identities and/or experiences (LGBTQIA+) is essential, yet little is known about physiotherapists' preparedness to provide affirming care. This study explored the knowledge and confidence of pelvic health physiotherapists in Australia when working with LGBTQIA+ patients.; Methods: Qualified physiotherapists practising in pelvic health in Australia were invited to complete an online survey. Qualitative data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis.; Results: Sixty-three participants met eligibility criteria. The median participant age was 38 years (interquartile range 32-47 years), with a median of 9 years' (interquartile range 5-14 years) pelvic health clinical experience. Most participants identified as women (98.4%) and straight/heterosexual (87.3%), and 11.5% self-identified as LGBTQIA+. Although >75% of participants provided care for LGBTQIA+ patients, only 39% had undertaken LGBTQIA+-specific postgraduate education. One overarching theme, relationship between LGBTQIA+ exposure and knowledge and confidence, was identified, comprising two high-level themes: (1) the knowledge that shapes inclusive practice, and (2) pathways to inclusive practice. Participants with LGBTQIA+-specific pelvic health training and/or community connections demonstrated higher levels of knowledge and confidence, and most expressed a need for further training, particularly in gender-affirming language and care for people who are transgender.; Conclusion: Pelvic health physiotherapists in Australia demonstrate varied knowledge and confidence when treating LGBTQIA+ individuals, shaped by exposure and education. Integrating LGBTQIA+ content into training may enhance pelvic health physiotherapists' capability to deliver inclusive, affirming care. (© 2026 The Author(s) (or their employer(s)). Published by CSIRO Publishing.)

5. Parenting and Occupational Therapy: An Exploration of Global Practice

Authors: McGrath, Margaret;Honey, Anne;Almomani, Fidaa;Chen, Yu-Wei Ryan;Codd, Yvonne;Kim, Junghun Aj;Kunishige, Masafumi;Morrison, Rodolfo;Peterson, Jessica;Pituch, Evelina;Romli, Muhammad Hibatullah;Rozen, Deena;Sabbah, Rachel;Sarsak, Hassan I.;Saunders, Elaine;Sim, So Sin;Tan, Hwei Lan;Wan Yunus, Farahiyah;Tung, Wong Wing;Mara, Veronica O., et al

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: OTJR : Occupation, Participation and Health 46(3), pp. 422–433

Abstract: Occupational therapists recognize parenting as within their scope; however, little is known about how this translates to practice with adult clients with disabilities or other challenges. We sought to describe contemporary global occupational therapy practice for parenting with adult clients, including assessment and interventions. A cross-sectional e-survey designed for the study was implemented in eight languages. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling. Responses were received from 1,357 occupational therapists across 42 countries. Of these, 43.1% (n = 586) frequently ask their clients who are parents about parenting roles and occupations, while 34.2% (n = 465) frequently or very frequently address parenting concerns. Assessments typically relied on informal approaches or the use of broad measures of occupational performance. The most frequently reported parenting intervention was the provision of education and training in parenting skills. Occupational therapy practice for parenting remains underdeveloped, with limited evidence of comprehensive occupational therapy assessment or intervention.

6. The role of physiotherapists in acute post-stroke neurorehabilitation: qualitative perspectives from clinicians and stroke unit managers

Authors: Pérez-De La Cruz, Sagrario

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being 21(1), pp. 2634880

Abstract: Purpose: The aim of this study was to explore and compare the perspectives of both physiotherapists and medical managers regarding the professional role and clinical contributions of physiotherapy within stroke units.; Method: A qualitative study was conducted involving ten physiotherapists and five medical managers from stroke units. Participants shared their professional experiences concerning work performance and the perceived impact of physiotherapy on patient care.; Results: Thematic analysis identified four key areas for physiotherapists: specific training, professional functions, treatment modalities, and the relevance of professionalism and empathy. For medical managers, the analysis focused on their perception of physiotherapy work, their understanding of factors that enhance treatment, and assigned functions. The findings reveal a lack of standardized treatment protocols (non-heterogeneity) and emphasize the need for strong interpersonal professional relationships and high standards of professionalism.; Conclusions: The observed heterogeneity in practices leads to inconsistencies in patient care. Furthermore, there is a notable gap in medical managers' understanding of the specific clinical scope and technical interventions provided by physiotherapists. These findings highlight the need for coordinated rehabilitation programs and a clearer definition of the physiotherapist's role in acute stroke units to ensure equitable and comprehensive care.

7. Reclaiming Life After Stroke: A Scoping Review of Qualitative Studies on Post-Rehabilitation Experiences

Authors: Pradhan, Suman;Chatterjee, Subhasish and Saha, Mousumi

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Physiotherapy Research International : The Journal for Researchers and Clinicians in Physical Therapy 31(3), pp. e70244

Abstract: Stroke survivors often face complex challenges even after completing formal rehabilitation. This scoping review synthesizes qualitative research (2015-2025) on post-stroke experiences, focusing equally on emotional/psychological, physical, and social reintegration aspects. Thirteen studies (totaling over 250 stroke survivors across varied ages and regions) were included. The findings reveal that survivors commonly grapple with emotional distress (e.g., depression, anxiety, loss of identity), persistent physical impairments (e.g., fatigue, mobility limitations), and difficulties re-establishing social roles and relationships. Despite these challenges, many survivors gradually adapt through personal perseverance and support from family, peers, and health professionals. Gaps in post-discharge support were evident, with survivors often feeling abandoned once formal therapy ended. We present four tables summarizing study characteristics and key themes, and four figures illustrating trends and conceptual relationships. Overall, holistic, person-centered approaches addressing psychological well being, long-term physical needs, and social reintegration are essential. This review highlights the importance of coordinated follow-up services and support systems to enhance quality of life and community participation for stroke survivors after rehabilitation. (© 2026 John Wiley & Sons Ltd.)

8. Pornography: What Occupational Therapists Need to Know for Clinical Practice

Authors: Rothman, Emily F. and Ellis, Kathryn M.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: The American Journal of Occupational Therapy : Official Publication of the American Occupational Therapy Association 80(4)

Abstract: Occupational therapists are increasingly likely to encounter clients who intentionally view sexually explicit media (i.e., pornography). Pornography use may be adaptive, neutral, or maladaptive depending on several variables: whether its use is causing the client distress; whether it is affecting their daily occupations and relationships; its degree of congruence with their values; and environmental constraints, such as client privacy, isolation, and disability. In this column, we argue that all occupational therapists should be prepared to work with clients who use pornography and to recognize how pornography use as a health management or leisure activity may support or interfere with participation, routines, roles, safety, and client well-being. (Copyright © 2026 by the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.)

9. Impact of Rehabilitation on Readmission Rates in Older Patients with COPD with Disability After Hospital Discharge

Authors: Shirakawa, Chigusa;Shiroshita, Akihiro;Miyakoshi, Chisato;Uda, Kazuaki;Nagata, Kazuma;Tachikawa, Ryo;Tomii, Keisuke and Kataoka, Yuki

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: COPD 23(1), pp. 2593282

Abstract: This study aimed to evaluate the impact of rehabilitation on readmission rates among older patients requiring nursing care following with COPD following hospitalization for lower respiratory tract infection, focusing on whether initiating rehabilitation within two months post-discharge reduces readmissions. We conducted a retrospective observational study using insurance claim data in Kobe City, Japan, with a population of approximately 1.5 million. We included Patients with COPD aged 65 or older with certified care-need levels under Long-term Care Insurance system in Japan, hospitalized for lower respiratory tract infections and survived alive. Patients were classified based on their functional capacity in Activities of Daily Living (ADL). We used the extended Cox model to consider rehabilitation as time-varying exposure and assess the hazard ratios for readmission, adjusting for ADL. The ADL level was adjusted as a confounder. The survival probabilities were estimated among patients who experienced rehabilitation within two months and those who did not experience rehabilitation. Among 745 patients, 479 received rehabilitation within two months post-discharge, 105 received it later, and 161 did not receive rehabilitation. Participation in rehabilitation was associated with an increased hazard ratio for readmission (HR: 1.63, 95% CI: 1.19, 2.24), compared to those without it. The estimated survival curve of patients receiving rehabilitation within two months overlapped with that of those who did not receive rehabilitation. Rehabilitation following exacerbation in older patients with COPD who have disability may increase the risk of readmission after discharge. Healthcare providers should consider that patients with COPD with severe disability and complex needs may require staged, individualized rehabilitation.

10. Occupational Therapy in Crisis

Authors: Smallfield, Stacy and Mahoney, Wanda J.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: The American Journal of Occupational Therapy : Official Publication of the American Occupational Therapy Association 80(4)

Abstract: The occupational therapy profession in the United States is in crisis. This is not a new phenomenon in occupational therapy's history; we have previously experienced two crises, in the 1940s and 1970s. Crises arise when the current professional paradigm insufficiently addresses occupational therapy practice challenges. Similar to the past, there are issues in society, health care,

and the profession prompting this identity crisis. Occupational therapy practitioners no longer have a consensus about the field's theoretical base, view of humans, and scope of practice. By calling attention to this crisis, we hope to awaken occupational therapy practitioners to actively decide the future of our profession. (Copyright © 2026 by the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.)

11. Virtual reality interventions and applications used in rehabilitation in adults with multiple sclerosis: A scoping review

Authors: Vásquez-Carrasco, Edgar;Hernandez-Martinez, Jordan;Aravena-Sagardía, Pablo;Lopez-Andaur, Roberto;Fernández-Rodríguez, Eduardo José and Valdés-Badilla, Pablo

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Multiple Sclerosis and Related Disorders 111, pp. 107260

Abstract: Background: This scoping review aimed to identify and synthesize the types of virtual reality (VR) interventions and applications used in the rehabilitation of adults with multiple sclerosis (MS).; Methods: A comprehensive search was conducted across seven generic databases (MEDLINE/PubMed, Scopus, Cochrane Library, Web of Science Core Collection, EBSCOhost, CINAHL, and ProQuest) up to April 2026. The review followed PRISMA-ScR guidelines and the protocol was prospectively registered in OSF <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/G7R5X> RESULTS: A total of 670 records were identified, and 33 studies met the inclusion criteria. The evidence showed a predominance of non-immersive and semi-immersive VR systems, whereas fully immersive and augmented/projection-based applications were less frequently reported. Applications were technologically heterogeneous and included commercial exergaming platforms, motion-sensing systems, specialized rehabilitation devices, immersive head mounted systems, telerehabilitation tools, and projection-based environments CONCLUSIONS: VR based rehabilitation in adults with MS is characterized by heterogeneous technologies and diverse clinical applications. Current evidence supports VR mainly as a feasible adjunctive rehabilitation tool, with non-immersive and semi-immersive systems predominating and fully immersive or augmented/projection-based approaches emerging as areas for further research. (Copyright © 2026 The Author(s). Published by Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.)

12. Increasing mobility in hospital after hip fracture.

Authors: Kearney RS.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: The Bone and Joint Journal, 108-B(6):747-750.

Abstract: [The World Hip Trauma Evaluation (WHiTE) 15: INITIATE is a two-arm, multicentre, cluster, randomized controlled trial with embedded process and economic evaluations. Half of the centres where these patients are treated will provide routine care, and the other half will provide routine care with increased duration and frequency of physiotherapy combined with strategies to increase mobility-focused activities

13. Developing occupational therapy and physiotherapy clinical support workers in their role in supporting student education.

Authors: Bradley G.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: British Journal of Occupational Therapy;89(4): 264–274.

Abstract: Global healthcare services face increasing pressures and workforce shortages. But at the same time, there are increasing learners in practice as part of longer-term workforce strategies, which, in turn, create extra demands on educators and teams. Anecdotally, we understand that clinical support workers (CSWs) are sharing responsibilities for student learning, yet there is limited understanding of this involvement or activities to support role development. The aims of this study were to (1) explore the CSW role in the practice education of students and (2) evaluate a training programme for CSWs.

14. Understanding the current available workforce planning data for Occupational Therapists: A scoping review to support collaboration workforce planning in the Leeds Health and Care System.

Authors: Matysiak K.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: British Journal of Occupational Therapy; 89(3):154–164.

Abstract: [Strategic workforce planning is a priority for health and social care, and the city of Leeds is focused on localised planning to balance supply and demand and develop this based on changing needs of the system. There are gaps in data required for Occupational Therapy (OT) workforce modelling; therefore, we need to find out whether proxy data exist that can support this activity in Leeds.]

15. Reflections on RCOT campaign ‘complexity of occupation’: The dimensions of occupation and the dimensions of practice.

Authors: da Cruz D .

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: British Journal of Occupational Therapy;89(4):215–216.

Abstract: [The Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) campaign on the ‘Complexity of Occupation’, part of its Workforce Strategy, promotes occupation-centred practice as the profession’s distinct contribution to health and social care. Research shows this approach strengthens professional identity, enhances health outcomes and clarifies roles (Phillips et al., 2023).]

16. Delivery arrangements for rehabilitation services in health systems: an overview of systematic reviews.

Authors: Del Furia MJ.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews; 21;4(4)

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