

Addressing Sexual and Pelvic Health in Clinical Practice

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Project Description & Sites

1. Acquire advanced clinical practice skills in pelvic and sexual health through observation and direct hands-on care with adult and geriatric clients under the supervision of an occupational therapist
2. Determine the specific needs of staff and/or clients within an outpatient clinic, Motivate Therapy in Rockford, IL, in order to develop programming on sexual and pelvic health that staff, clients, occupational therapy (OT) educators, OT students, and/or OT practitioners can utilize



Informal Needs Assessment & Literature Review

- It is within the scope of practice for OT to address areas that are typically impacted by PF dysfunction, such as toileting, sexual activity, leisure participation, and community mobility; additionally, OT practitioners have the knowledge to understand the interactions between the “digestive, metabolic, and endocrine system” structures and “genitourinary and reproductive” structures in order to support clients’ “health, well-being, and participation in life through engagement in occupation” (American Occupational Therapy Association, p. S23, 2014).
- Sexual health and any concerns regarding sexual activity are important to routinely address with individuals experiencing any kind of PF dysfunction since the majority of these dysfunctions such as pelvic organ prolapse, urinary tract symptoms, and pelvic pain have been linked to adverse effects on sexual activity (Kingsberg et al., 2019; Rosenbaum, 2007).
- Research regarding OT and sexual activity is scarce, and the topic of sexual activity is often disregarded by OT educators in OT curriculum (Hattjar et al., 2008; Lohman et al., 2017).
- The majority of OT practitioners and OT students are having to seek out basic information regarding both sexual and pelvic health through continuing education, clinical training under a mentor who is proficient in these areas, or through certification (Neuman et al., 2009).
- After assessing the needs of staff in the clinic, the following were the most important needs identified: programming about erectile dysfunction, lubricant recommendations, natural dietary recommendations and supplements for various issues, and recommendations for scar care.

Mission & Vision Statements

Project Mission Statement:

To create and provide a facility with additional programming to address the individual needs of clients and/or educational needs of staff regarding sexual and pelvic health

Project Vision Statement:

To improve the quality of services provided for individuals seeking help with their sexual health and pelvic health needs

Project Completion & Outcomes

- Observed and provided direct care to 116 clients with sexual and pelvic dysfunction
- Successful completion of *Part A: Sex and Sexuality in Physical Therapy Practice*
- Developed nine different handouts for clients and the general public
- Created an additional resource with general information and how to conduct an initial evaluation in pelvic floor therapy
- In a survey administered after all programming was developed and implemented, all therapists strongly agreed that every resource created was useful.

Deliverables

1. A resource designed for clients of pelvic floor therapy and the general public consisting of nine different handouts: *Is Pelvic Floor Therapy Right for You?*, *Erectile Dysfunction*, *Lubricant Recommendations*, *Natural Supplements for Female and Male Sexual Dysfunction*, and more.
2. The *Pelvic Floor General Information and Initial Evaluation Resource* that can be utilized by OT educators, OT students, and OT practitioners to increase their awareness, knowledge, confidence, and competence when addressing sexual and pelvic health needs
3. A summary of the perceived needs of staff at Motivate Therapy

Future Implications for OT

- More awareness, education, training, and programming must be provided to OT educators, OT students, and OT practitioners to improve their ability to address sexual and pelvic health
- More research needs to be conducted regarding sexual health and especially pelvic health in OT curriculum



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KEY REFERENCES

*Full reference list and image reference list available upon request