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## Exploring Occupation-Based Practice for Athletes with Sports-Related Injuries

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# Exploring Occupation-Based Practice for Athletes with Sports-Related Injuries

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## BACKGROUND

- Sport is a meaningful occupation for athletes that fosters a sense of routine and purpose (Andreas et al., 2021).
- Sports can be identified as leisure, play, or work which are three occupations listed in the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework.
- The population of athletes within the United States is immense and continues to grow daily (Andreas et al., 2021).
- With the ever-growing popularity of sports, there has been an increase in acute and chronic injuries (Ecklund, 2021).
- Approximately 2,700,000 athletes sustained a sports-related injury in 2020 (NSC, 2020).

## PROBLEM

- There is a **lack of research** regarding occupational therapy's (OT) involvement in the rehabilitation of athletes with sport-related injuries.
- The profession of OT has **yet to be widely acknowledged and recognized** within the world of sports (Reed, 2011).
- Although occupational therapists (OTs) are currently working with athletes on sports rehabilitation and recovery, there is **uncertainty within the profession of the presence of OBP** with the population of athletes.

## PURPOSE

1. To explore the use of occupation-based practice with athletes who have sustained a sports-related injury.
2. To understand and advocate the role of OT in the sports rehabilitation setting.
3. To increase awareness of the importance of occupation-based practice for OTs working in the sports rehabilitation setting.

## RESEARCH STUDY

### METHODOLOGY & RESULTS

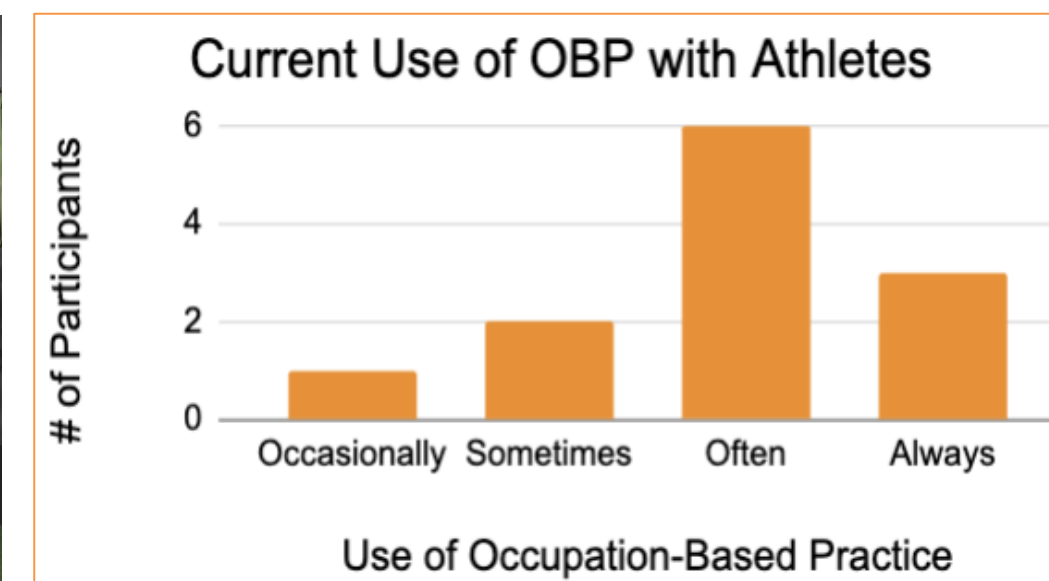
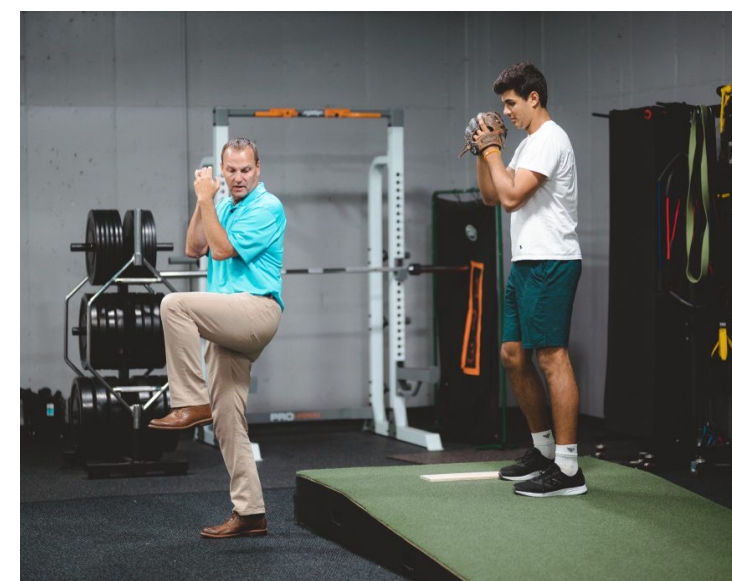
This mixed-methods research study aimed at exploring the question: **“What are the perceptions of occupational therapists working with athletes on the use of occupation-based practice (OBP)?”** OTs who have past or present experience working with the athletic population were recruited from around the country via social media posts, OT forums, personal connections, and snowball sampling. 14 OTs (n=14) participated in the 10-minute online survey, one (n=1) of which participated in an optional virtual interview.

### OCCUPATION-BASED PRACTICE

THEMES	SUBTHEMES
Meaningful and Desired Occupations	Occupation as Means and as Ends
	Simulation and Use of Occupation
Foundation of Practice	Improvement in Occupational Performance

### BARRIERS

Environment and Space
Lack of Knowledge and Resources
Billing and Cost



## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

### METHODOLOGY & RESULTS

A needs assessment was utilized to identify the strengths and barriers of the treatment methods utilized with athletes, the environment and space, and the equipment and materials used. The staff at Sharp Rees-Stealy Santee was found to provide extensive use of treatment methods, including a variety of manual-based therapy, preparatory methods, and occupation-based interventions with athletic patients.

TREATMENT APPROACHES	ENVIRONMENT AND SPACE	EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS
Manual-Based Therapy	<b>STRENGTHS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate space for most interventions</li> <li>• Inviting atmosphere</li> </ul>	Large variety of equipment available
Preparatory Methods		Most equipment and materials were utilized during treatment
Occupation-Based Interventions	<b>BARRIERS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited space for some occupations and during peak hours</li> </ul>	Easy access and convenient

## DISCUSSION

- The student researcher implemented both a research study and a needs assessment to gain a further understanding of the topic.
- The student researcher collected a broad yet in-depth understanding of OT's role in the sports world, as well as how current occupational therapists perceive the use of OBP in treatment of athletes.
- Based on the findings, it is understood that OT does have a unique role in treating athletes with sports-related injuries.
- The presence may be limited, but occupational therapists can play a significant role in the rehabilitation process.
- Other disciplines within the orthopedic setting may have a specialty in the rehabilitation process with athletes; however, it is important to understand the unique value that OT can offer to athletes recovering from a sports-related injury.

## IMPLICATIONS

- This capstone project helped to better understand OT's role in sports rehabilitation and educate the OT profession on the importance of utilizing occupation (OBP) as a foundation for treatment with athletes.
- In collaboration with the athlete, OT can assist in implementing strategies for the individual to target areas of limitations, ensuring the athlete has optimal engagement throughout their participation and engagement in their desired sport (Andreas et al., 2021).
- The study results show that OTs have a unique role in the rehabilitation and recovery of athletes, and OBP is a treatment method that should be used within OT services to ensure goals are achieved and met successfully.



← Deliverable

References →

