

“Need more OTAs!”: OTAs Role within the ASU



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1. Introduction/ Background

Only 38% of stroke survivors are getting the recommended levels of occupational therapy whilst in the acute setting (National Office of Clinical Audit, 2022). A potential avenue to explore with regard to improving the functioning of occupational therapy services within the acute stroke unit (ASU) involves the employment of occupational therapy assistants (OTAs). Limited evidence is published on the role of OTAs internationally, with no evidence found regarding the impact of OTAs within ASUs.

2. Research Question

Question:

What is the perceived role and impact of OTAs in relation to service delivery within acute stroke units in the Republic of Ireland?

Sub-Questions:

- To examine what tasks are being undertaken by OTAs in the ASU
- To examine the perceptions of OTs towards OTAs
- To examine OTs satisfaction with the use of OTAs in their profession



3. Research Design

Methodology: Quantitative Descriptive Approach

Participants: 22 OTs working in ASUs
7 OTAs working in ASUs
2 Occupational Therapy Managers

Data Collection: Online Survey

Data Analysis: Univariate Descriptive Statistics

Ethics: Approval UCC Clinical Therapies Social Research Ethics Committee

4. Findings

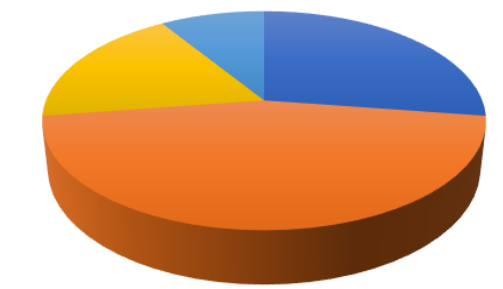
Presence of OTA

- 59% had an OTA
- 27% had a generic therapy assistant
- 14% had no therapy assistant



CHOs
8/9 CHOs represented in this data

How satisfied are you in general, with the use of OTAs in your profession?



■ Extremely satisfied ■ Somewhat satisfied
■ Neither satisfied or dissatisfied ■ Somewhat dissatisfied
■ Extremely dissatisfied

1. OTs with OTAs

100% of OTs feel OTAs beneficial

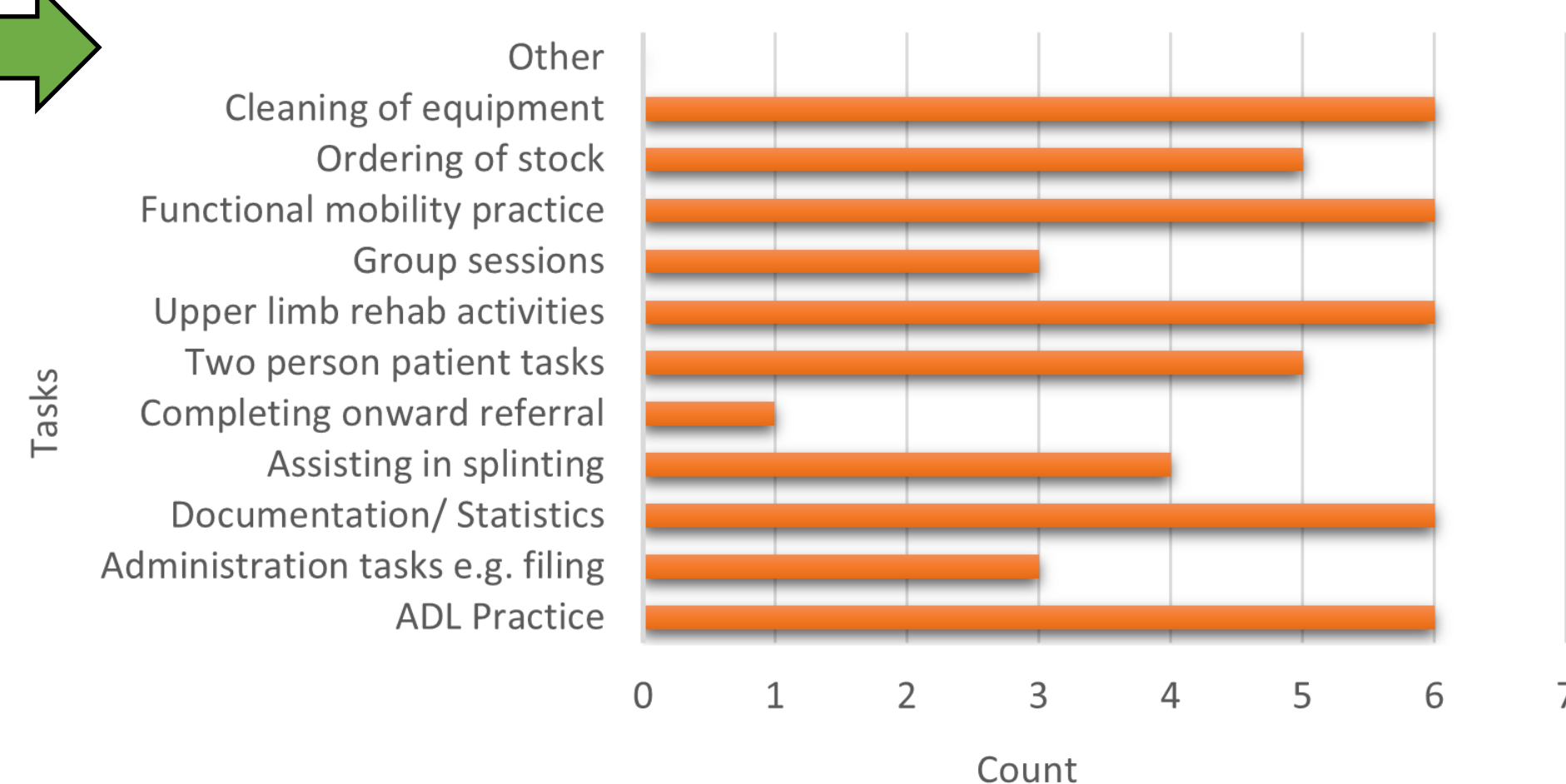
91% of OTs confident in delegating tasks to OTA

27% of OTs satisfied with use of OTAs

2. OTAs

19 Hours – Avg. time OTAs spend in ASUs

Tasks completed by OTA include:



3. OTs with no OTAs

3-15 Hours - OTs spend completing tasks that could be completed by OTA

100% ASU services reported they would benefit from addition of OTA

How confident are you in referring clinical tasks to OTA?



■ Extremely confident ■ Somewhat confident
■ Neither confident or unconfident ■ Not at all confident

5. Discussion

- ❑ First study to describe the **perceived impact and role** of OTAs in ASUs in the Republic of Ireland and the **tasks** currently completed by ASU OTAs.
- ❑ There are **many tasks** within the ASU that OTAs could be completing but delegation is not happening potentially due to a **lack of clarity** surrounding the **OTA role**.
- ❑ Overall, the results indicate there are **many benefits** of OTAs to the ASU, however, OTs feel that OTAs could be **better utilised** within the ASU.

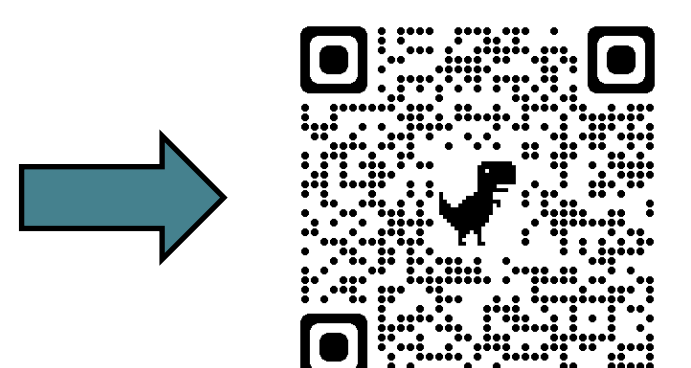
6. Implications for OT Practice

- ❑ Need for more clarity regarding the role of the OTA and how they spend their time in the ASU
- ❑ There is potential for OTAs to complete a large range of tasks reducing burden on the OT and allowing OTs to focus on more complex tasks
- ❑ Further research needed regarding the possible impact OTAs have on the delivery of best-practice OT services within ASUs

7. References

- ❑ National Office of Clinical Audit. (2022). *Irish National Audit of Stroke Organisational Audit Report 2021*. https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/noca-uploads/general/Irish_National_Audit_of_Stroke_Organisational_Audit_Report_2021_FINAL.pdf

Full Article Here



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