

Mapping Research Activity Related to Occupation and Mental Health: Scoping Study

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Introduction. RCOMH was set up in direct response to the challenges set out in *Recovering Ordinary Lives* [COT, 2006] which aimed to reassert that occupation is core to mental health and well-being, and create a strategic vision for the future of occupational therapy services in mental health across the UK. One of the guiding principles states that “by 2017 occupational therapy researchers will have built a firm evidence base for occupational therapy interventions”. However, there is a paucity of research about occupation and mental health generally [D’Amico, Jaffe & Gibson, 2010]. International coordinated programmes of research, making effective use of existing resources, are needed to remedy this [Bannigan & Laver-Fawcett, 2011].

The aim. The aim of the respective study is to map research activity related to occupation and mental health by identifying:

- who wants to be involved in this research activity,
- their current or previous research, including any publications, about occupation and mental health, and
- their perceptions of future research needs in this field.

Materials and methods. A scoping study [Arksey & O’Malley, 2005] was conducted, using an online questionnaire, to collect data from occupational therapists across the world to map an international response to where and how people might be involved in research, and identify existing publications. (Ethics reference number OTIS1 1OCT 10 KB).

Results. Of the 199 respondents, 164 (82.4%) wanted to be involved in the research, 133 (66.8%) were interested in being involved in one of Research Centre for Occupation & Mental Health’s (RCOMH) research programmes, 106 (53%) had involvement in research, and 121 (61%) wanted to network with other researchers. One hundred and six (53.2%) respondents stated that they were currently involved in (n = 56) or had been (n = 50) involved in research. They listed 152 research studies and cited 225 articles and presentations. Fifty were postgraduate researchers, 23 were linked to universities or wider organisations and 35 named funding from external agencies. Respondents (n = 114) identified a wide range of topics as priorities for the research.

Conclusions. This scoping exercise has provided intelligence for developing collaborative, coordinated international research programmes. RCOMH will use this data to develop its research programmes.