

Top 10 priorities for occupational therapy research in the UK

The Royal College of Occupational Therapists' (RCOT) vision for research is that, within the next decade, a UK-wide culture that embraces engaging in and with research as every occupational therapist's business will become embedded within the profession.

The top 10 priorities for occupational therapy research in the UK will set the research agenda for occupational therapy in the future and help focus efforts on addressing the unanswered questions that matter most to people accessing and delivering occupational therapy services.

The top 10

- 1** How does occupational therapy make a difference and have impact on everyday lives?
- 2** How can occupational therapists ensure that person-centred practice is central to how they work?
- 3** How can occupational therapists work more effectively with the family and carers of people who access services?
- 4** What are the long-term benefits of occupational therapy intervention?
- 5** What are the benefits or impact of occupational therapy in primary care settings? (e.g. services delivered by your local general practice surgery, community pharmacy, dental and optometry (eye health) services)
- 6** How can occupational therapy services be more inclusive of both mental and physical health?
- 7** What is the role of occupational therapy in supporting self-management? (e.g. helping people with illness to manage their health on a day-to-day basis)
- 8** What is the role or impact of occupational therapy in reducing hospital admissions?
- 9** How can occupational therapists work most effectively with other professionals to improve outcomes for people who access services? (e.g. multi-disciplinary teams, commissioners, community agencies)
- 10** What is the cost-effectiveness of occupational therapy services?

In 2019, RCOT partnered with the James Lind Alliance (JLA) to set up a Priority Setting Partnership. Following the JLA's well-respected and inclusive methodology, we asked people who access occupational therapy, their carers, occupational therapists and other health and care professionals to identify unanswered questions that research could answer.

In July 2020, the top 10 were agreed by representatives of people with lived experience of accessing and delivering occupational therapy services.

Each priority is an overarching summary question within which there may be more focused research questions. The priorities can be applied to a wide range of conditions, symptoms, interventions, areas and contexts of practice, and across different ages and communities.

RCOT is calling on its members and the wider research community to undertake, participate in or facilitate research to address the top 10 priorities.

Find out more at: rcot.co.uk/top-10

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