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Rush University

Con el Poder de la Comunidad: Exploring the Intersection of Occupational Therapy and Global Health in the Dominican Republic

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 - Casandra Madrigal, Community Empowerment Operations Manager
- **Doctoral Capstone Director:** Dr. Paula Costello, OTD, OTR/L
- **Program Chair & Director:** Dr. Linda Olson, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA



Background

Rush Office of Global Health & Community Empowerment

- Not for profit organization in DR and U.S.
- **Mission:** Work with local leadership in underserved communities to provide essential health care, while fostering the development of self-sustaining health care systems
- **First Community:** Peralta
 - Partnership began in 2003
 - The Peralta clinic and the Ministry of Health developed an official partnership in 2018
- **Current Community:** Villa Verde
- **RUMC Led Trips**
 - Primary Care
 - *One week every three months*
 - Surgical Care Trips
 - *Urology/gynecology, orthopedic, ENT, plastic, general*



Literature Review

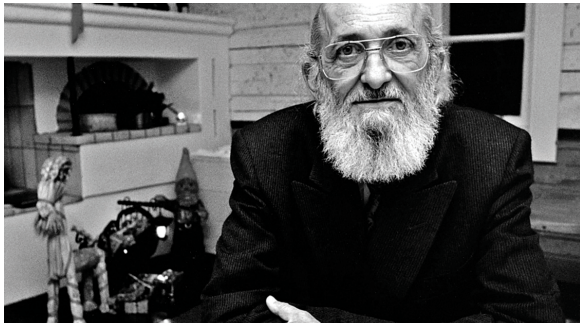
- Prior research on **OT in global health** found that OT's role focused largely on **education** (Barillier & Jaegers, 2020; Shlegel & Mathieson, 2020)
- It is well documented that OTs are **vital members of surgical** (Rogers et al., 2017) and **primary care teams** (Garvey et al., 2015; Halle et al, 2018) and improve **function, QoL and reduce risk of adverse events**
- Research shows rehabilitation services are **crucial to increase functioning in individuals with chronic health conditions** to maintain independence, participate in their valued roles and increase their QoL (Heinneman et al, 2020)
- Key themes to **creating and sustaining global partnership in OT** are creating trust and respect, effective communication, using cultural competence, sharing power and resources with stakeholders and aiming for reciprocal learning (Hansen, 2015)
- **Unmet need for greater rehabilitation services worldwide** (Heinneman et al, 2020) and WHO endorsed **function as the third health indicator** (Richard & Vallee, 2020)



Conceptual & Theoretical Foundation

Person Environment Occupation Performance Model (PEOP)

- Individual's occupational performance is dependent on **the interaction between the person, their environment and their occupation**
- Guide for questioning and understanding during participatory action research study



Empowerment Theory

- Paulo Freire
- Supports **active group participation** and interaction
- **Promotes health education and prevention**
- Education is dependent on the context in which it takes place

Project Significance

- Increase knowledge of valued roles and occupations of individuals living within partner communities in the DR
- Expand current knowledge of how OT could function on interdisciplinary teams and help support Community Empowerment's overall mission and vision
- Increase awareness of the work Community Empowerment is doing in the DR among the OT profession and how OT's can become involved



Research Questions

1. What are the occupational priorities of individuals living within partner communities in the DR?
2. What are common medical conditions and health needs of individuals living within partner communities in the DR?
3. What could OT's role be in addressing these needs on future medical service trips to the DR?



Methods

Design

- Cross sectional study
- Using approaches of ethnography and PAR to collect data

Procedures

- PI spent six weeks in the Dominican Republic for data collection
- Three weeks in Villa Verde alongside internal medicine global health fellow and CE staff
- 1 week primary care team, 1 week urology/gynecology surgical team, 1 week orthopedic surgical team
- Study data was collected using a Google Form and journaling completed by the PI

Participants

- Principal investigator (PI) is the sole participant & primary source of data collection

Measures

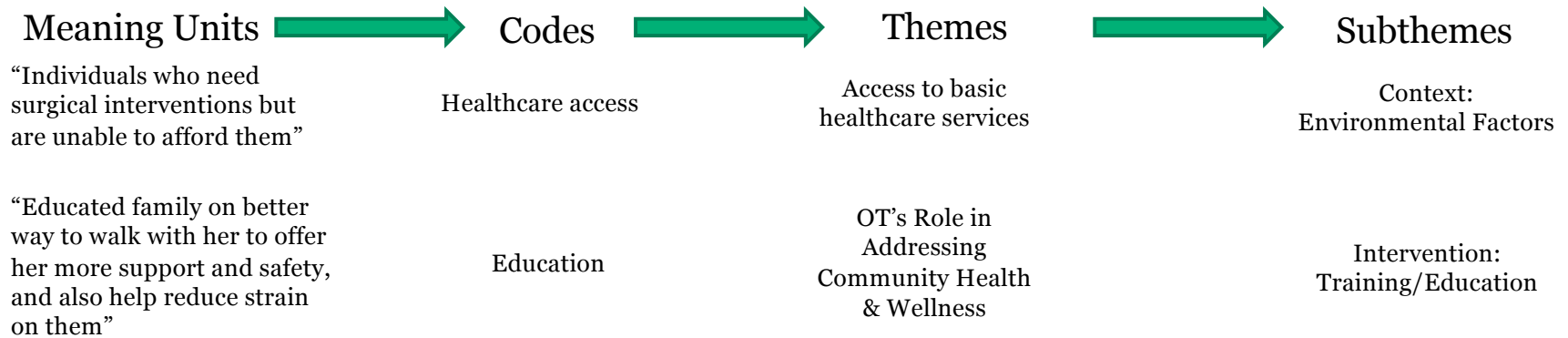
- Information will be gathered through observations, conversations and interactions with community members, local clinicians and members of interdisciplinary team

Analysis

- Content analysis was used to analyze the information in the Google Form and journal entries



Content Analysis



Theme 1: Access to Basic Healthcare Services

Theme 2: Lived Experiences of Community Members

Theme 3: Prevalent Medical Conditions

Theme 4: OT’s Role in Addressing Community Health & Wellness

Results

Research Question 1: Occupational Priorities

Health Management

- Symptom and condition management, medication management, nutrition management

Activities of Daily Living

- Bathing/showering, toileting, dressing, eating, functional mobility, personal hygiene and grooming, sexual activity

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living

- Care of others, community mobility, home establishment and management, meal preparation and cleanup, shopping

Research Question 2: Common Medical Conditions

- Diabetes, hypertension and chronic pain
- Arthritis, osteoarthritis, infection, low vision, generalized weakness and frailty
- Uterine prolapse, benign prostate hyperplasia
- Orthopedic conditions

Research Question 3: OT Role on Future Medical Teams

Occupations & Activities

- Functional mobility
- Dressing
- Toileting
- Personal Hygiene
- Activity analysis and adaptation

Education

- Chronic condition management
- Lifestyle changes for diabetes and hypertension
- Medication management
- Positioning, body mechanics, ergonomics
- Energy conservation

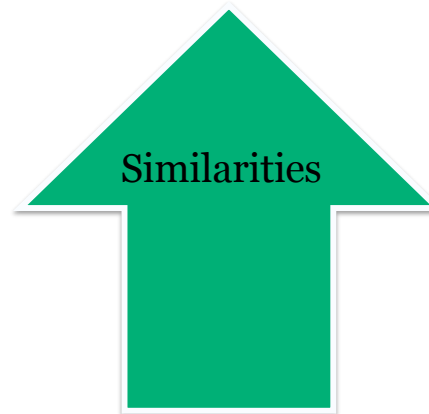
Training

- Caregiver training

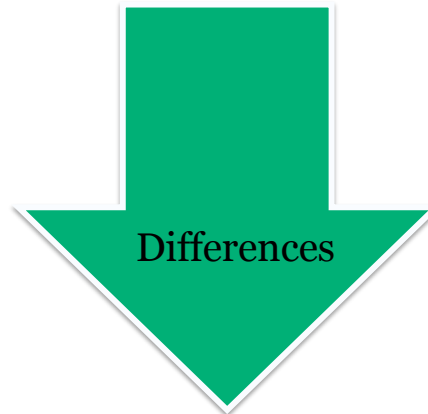
Interventions to Support Occupations

Discussion

- Highlights what a role could be on these trips for occupational therapists
- First time this data has been collected from an occupational therapist perspective



- Similar gaps in healthcare services seen by other OT research in global health
- OT role in a primary care team
- OT role within diabetes management, chronic pain, early mobility and acute medical setting, pelvic floor therapy



- General lack of literature about OT in the DR and in other countries
- Emerging OT profession in the DR

Clinical Implications

Introduction for how Occupational therapy services can integrate within interdisciplinary medical teams working in the Dominican Republic

There is a role for occupational therapy in the DR to work with Community Empowerment and help support partner communities in increasing their overall health and wellness

Increased research and participation by occupational therapists is needed in the global health setting to continue learning more about and advocating for OT involvement in interdisciplinary medical service teams

Conclusion

Problem Statement

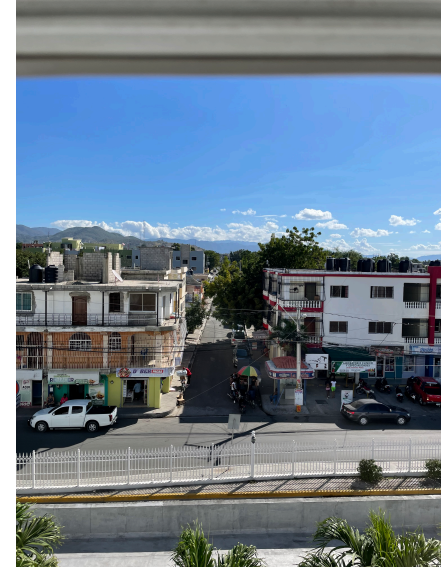
- Occupational therapy services are not included on interdisciplinary medical teams working in the DR

Research Methods

- Content analysis of daily observation logs and reflective journal entries on interactions and observations with community members in the DR and interdisciplinary medical team members

Anticipated Impact

- Increased occupational therapy services on future Rush and Community Empowerment medical service trips to the Dominican Republic resulting in increased rehabilitative services for partner communities



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Thank you.