

# Clinical Leadership in Occupational Therapy

# Background and context

- Little is known about occupational therapists' views of clinical leadership.
- Heard (2014) warned that the limited volume of leadership studies presents serious concerns for the profession.

# Study aim

- To gather and summarise Occupational Therapists' perceptions and experiences of clinical leadership.

# Objectives

- ❑ To map the current roles, education, training and leadership experience of OTs in the UK.
- ❑ To explore the key attributes of an effective clinical leader from the perspective of OTs.
- ❑ To examine the impact of training on clinical leadership positions held by OTs.
- ❑ To develop an understanding of the perceived barriers and facilitators influencing OTs' leadership development.
- ❑ To provide recommendations for leadership training, development and practice.

# Mixed Methods

Quan  
Surveys



Qual  
In-depth  
Interviews



# Interviews

- ❑ 13 occupational therapists were interviewed to explore in depth their perceptions and experiences of clinical leadership.
- ❑ Interviewees had participated in an earlier national survey of clinical leadership undertaken in the UK.
- ❑ Informed written consent was required for participation in the interview.
- ❑ Semi-structured interviews were employed to gain a deeper understanding of the emergent key themes arising from the survey.
- ❑ Interviews were digitally recorded

# Questions explored.....

- Participants understanding of the term clinical leadership in occupational therapy
- Participants thoughts on why little has been written about clinical leadership in occupational therapy
- The characteristics of an effective leader
- Whether anyone can be a leader
- Whether participants considered themselves to be clinical leaders

# Questions explored.....

- ❑ Factors influencing leadership development
- ❑ Barriers and facilitators to clinical leadership development
- ❑ The most important factors influencing the development of clinical leaders in occupational therapy
- ❑ Support that might be of benefit to the development of clinical leaders

# Interview analysis

- ❑ Interviews were transcribed verbatim.
- ❑ Supplementary notes were made after each interview to document observations of non-verbal behaviour and also record the investigator's thoughts and feelings about the interviews.
- ❑ Drew on the principles of analysis of grounded theory, as set out by Charmaz (2006)



# Key themes

- ❑ Professional identity
- ❑ Profile and Impact (Information needs to be more prominent)
- ❑ Opportunities for development  
(mentorship/coaching/experiential learning)
- ❑ Training and education
- ❑ Support and direction

# Recommendations

- ❑ Need to promote the profession
- ❑ Need to advocate the value of occupational therapy
- ❑ Need to get to a place of strategic influence
- ❑ Need to ensure clinical leadership is embedded in undergraduate training and education
- ❑ Need strong leadership in work environment
- ❑ Need to promote research and writing for publication
- ❑ Need ease of access to resources – wide reach
- ❑ Need support and direction from RCOT

# In summary

RCOT acknowledge the importance of clinical leadership (COT 2013, RCOT 2018) but there appears to be a disconnect between policy and practice.

This study provides an insight into the key issues for practitioners and makes recommendations to strengthen the position of occupational therapists as clinical leaders.

# References

Charmaz, k (2006) Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis. London. Sage Publications

College of Occupational Therapists (2013) Clinical Leadership: Occasional Paper No1. London: College of Occupational Therapists

Heard CL (2014) Choosing the Path of Leadership in Occupational Therapy. The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy. 2(1): 1-18.

The Royal College of Occupational Therapists (2018) Strategic Intentions 2018-2023. London. Royal College of Occupational Therapists.

# Thank you

