

Title: Background and Position Profile of American Occupational Therapists

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The background of occupational therapists (OT) has been assessed in select countries. This study assessed the background, preparation, and position characteristics of OT in the United States (US). A validated survey instrument was administered via mail to 493 randomly sampled OT. One hundered one subjects responded (Age = 43.87 ± 13.57 years) and provided written informed consent. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board. The survey resulted in 404 pages of data. Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to determine the relationship between subject variables and measures of job satisfaction. Answers to open-ended questions were content-analyzed. Salary was negatively correlated with start of workday ($r = -0.37$, $p \leq 0.001$). Background profile data revealed that the average undergraduate GPA (3.59/4.00 ± 0.30) and annual compensation (USD) of (75,801 ± 22,159). Fifty-two, twenty, twelve, and ten subjects specified that they hold a master's of science in OT, bachelor's in science, doctorate in OT, and entry level master's degree, respectively. The top four OT certifications include: 1) Certified Hand Therapist, 2) Certified Lymphedema Therapist, 3) Sensory Integration Praxis Test, and 4) Lee Silverman Voice Treatment. The top four OT specializations include: 1) Certified Lymphedema Therapist, 2) Low Vision, 3) Pediatrics, and 4) Sensory Integration. Compared to men, women had 18.0% more years of education. Despite this there were no sex-based differences in salary. The profession includes primarily women, consistent with research of other countries. Prospective and current OT can use these data to understand the qualifications and conditions of employment.

Biography

Alicia Thone is a research intern in the Exercise Science Research Laboratory at Lakeland University. She has presented several research studies at a variety of peer-reviewed scientific conferences including the International Society of Biomechanics in Sports Annual Symposium, as well at regional meetings of the National Strength and Conditioning Association and the American Occupational Therapy Association.

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