

An Exploratory Study Of Occupational Therapys' Assessment Competence: Competencies Of Occupational Therapy Dealing With Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

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Occupational therapists (OTs) working with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) face new challenges and opportunities as service settings diversify. To maintain high standards in ASD care, assessing the competencies of OTs in these roles is essential to ensure that therapists provide quality health services. This study aims to identify competencies that can assess occupational therapists' abilities in ASD settings. Two objectives guided the research: (1) to identify competencies through document analysis, and (2) to explore competencies based on the perspectives of specialist occupational therapists. A qualitative design was employed, incorporating document analysis and interviews with six experts, including two clinicians and four academic professionals. Thematic analysis, supported by Atlas.ti software, identified six key competency constructs: professionalism, performance and communication, clinical knowledge, clinical skills, patient management, and therapist contributions. Validation procedures, including Fleiss-kappa and expert content validation, ensured reliability. Findings indicate that these competencies offer a comprehensive assessment framework for OTs, evaluating skills, knowledge, and performance standards required for effective ASD patient care. This competency-based evaluation provides a valuable tool for measuring OTs' aptitude and suitability, contributing to higher service quality in ASD settings.

Biography

Dr. Ruwinah Abdul Karim, a visionary in occupational therapy, serves as the Clinical Director of Penawar Special Learning Centre (PSLC), Malaysia's leading provider of autism and learning disabilities support, now expanding across Indonesia. Under her leadership, PSLC has grown to 20 branches in Malaysia, delivering transformative care to thousands of children. Dr. Ruwinah is also a board member of the University of Malaya Centre for Addiction Science (UMCAS) and an associate of the Australia Dyslexia Association (AMADA). Her expertise and dedication to quality, inclusive care have made her a sought-after voice in Southeast Asian autism advocacy and educational reform.

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