



Creating a Competency to Increase Occupational Therapy Practitioner Knowledge and Confidence in Administering Cognitive Assessments and Screens

Aricka Hill, OTDS

Huntington University Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program

Project Description | Site

Areas of Study: 1) Program and Policy Development 2) Education

Area of Practice: Evidence Based Practice and Research

Site: IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital

Description: The primary focus of this capstone project was to increase clinician competence in utilizing cognitive assessments and screens to reduce readmission rates in the acute care setting with increased discharge accuracy, as well as provide patient education resources for increased safety.

Needs Assessment

- Requests from Ball Memorial education and compliance coordinator for OT practitioner competency addressing cognitive assessments
- Expressed concern from site on insurance companies not approving of some recommended discharge locations due to lack of standardized assessment scores
- Decreased clinician knowledge of cognitive assessments especially, functional assessments
- Increased patient readmission rates due to falls within the first month following a hospital discharge (Mahoney et al., 2000)



Project Completion and Outcomes

- Developed a cognitive assessment and screens competency to be distributed following an educational in-service on the reviewed assessments.
- Increased OT practitioner knowledge and competence in determining and administering appropriate cognitive assessments or screens
- Creation of action plan following assessment of site's need for patient safety handouts due to patients frequently demonstrating decreased safety awareness.
- Creation of a series of educational patient handouts in the areas of home modifications to reduce falls, energy conservation, and adaptive equipment
- Certificates in functional cognition, acute care discharge planning, and fall prevention strategies

Mission & Vision Statements

Mission Statement:

To educate acute care OT practitioners and establish usage of cognitive assessments and screens to increase discharge accuracy in short-term hospital stays.

Vision Statement:

To increase patient outcomes and clinician education in acute care.

Deliverables

- Continuing Education Certificates
- Cognitive Assessments and Screens Competency
- Action Plan for Creating Patient Education Materials
- Patient Safety and Education Materials

Artifacts

- Cognitive Assessment and Screening Tools
- Education Presentation for OT Practitioners
- Example Documentation for Cognitive Assessments
- Functional Cognition Intervention Resource
- Additional Continuing Education Certificates

Literature Review

- Research supports occupational therapy intervention in reducing hospital readmission rates (Lockwood & Porter, 2022; Roberts, 2020).
- Insurances companies may require standardized assessments to substantiate funding for additional OT services (Sorensen et al., 2020). This is more prevalent in patient cases where cognitive deficits are present versus functional deficits.
- Physicians often overlook identifying mild cognitive impairments (MCI) due to poor understanding of MCI (Blair et al., 2022). Acute care OTs use assessments to gather additional insight into patient deficits such as an MCI not provided by observations or informal interviews.
- Research supports cognitive screening tools in acute and their predictor of post-discharge functioning.

Future Implications for OT

Implications within the Field:

- Continued implementation of competency for all OTs at Ball Memorial
- Continued utilization of cognition resources to address cognition within acute care

Implications on My Career:

- Gained experience in creating and presenting materials during an educational in-service in acute care.
- Gained experience in creating and implementing competencies that I can translate into future jobs.

Christ | Scholarship | Service

Christ: Consideration of vulnerable populations to provide best patient care

Scholarship: Application of evidence-based practice throughout entirety of project

Service: Provided education and resources as well as created a competency for cognitive assessments and screens to increase quality of care



KEY REFERENCES:

Blair, E. M., Zahuranc, D. B., Forman, J., Reale, B. K., Langa, K. M., Giordani, B., Fagerlin, A., Kollman, C., Whitney, R. T., & Levine, D. A. (2022). Physician diagnosis and knowledge of mild cognitive impairment. *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, *JAD*, *85*(1), 273–282. <https://doi.org/10.3233/JAD-210565>

Lockwood, K., & Porter, J. (2022). Effectiveness of hospital-based interventions by occupational therapy practitioners on reducing readmissions: a systematic review with meta-analysis. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *76*. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2022.048959>

Roberts, P., Robinson, M., Furniss, J., & Melder, C. (2020). Occupational therapy's value in provision of quality care to prevent readmissions. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *74*(3). <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.743002>

Sorensen, M., Seroy, E., Salottolo, K., Waxman, M., West, T. A., Tanner, H. A., & Bar-Or, D. (2020). The effect of discharge destination and primary insurance provider on hospital discharge delay among patients with traumatic brain injury: a multicenter study of 1,543 patients. *Patient Safety in Surgery*, *14*(2). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13037-019-0227-z>

*Full reference list available upon request

Contact: hilla2@huntington.edu or ahill3121@gmail.com