

# Impact of Seating and Mobility Services for Individuals with Disabilities in El Salvador

Jonah Eckert, OTDS; Natalie Grady, OTDS; Erin Kline, OTDS; Holly Weber, OTDS.

Faculty Advisors: Dr. Nate Short & Dr. Heather St. Peters

## Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to examine perceptions of individuals with disabilities in El Salvador after receiving seating and mobility services and to analyze the impact of receiving these services on preferred occupations.

**Methods:** A retrospective one group pretest/posttest model was implemented, using a survey based on areas of occupation outlined in the OTPF-4 and the standardized Wheelchair Outcome Measure (WhOM) for those who received a wheelchair as their mobility device. Seating and mobility services were provided by licensed rehabilitation professionals using a short-term medical mission (STMM) model. Upon completion of data collection, data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Results:** For most questions of the survey assessing impact on ADLs, more than 86% of respondents selected positive responses (agree/strongly agree). For questions assessing impact on work and education, more than 45% of respondents answered the question did not apply to their situation. WhOM scores demonstrated a statistically significant improvement for satisfaction of performance of both in-home and out of home occupations after receiving services with a large effect size ( $P < .001$ ;  $d > 1$ ).

**Conclusions:** The findings of the study suggest that seating and mobility services provided by rehabilitation professionals in El Salvador improve participation in occupations for people with disabilities inside and outside the home. Compared to similar services provided by STMMs, the study emphasizes the importance of professional service provision along with education and training as best-practice.

**Keywords:** seating and mobility services, international service learning, wheelchair, WhOM, occupational participation, occupational therapy, education.