Research Opportunities in the Area of Home Modifications

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Evidence-Based Practice Project has developed a table summarizing the research opportunities on home modifications. The table provides an overview of the state of current available evidence on interventions within the scope of occupational therapy practice and is based on the systematic reviews from the AOTA’s Occupational Therapy Practice Guidelines Series. Researchers, students, and clinicians can use this information in developing innovative research to answer important questions within the occupational therapy field.


Planning a research project requires consideration of many factors. Level of interest and knowledge in a specific area, access to appropriate populations of participants, support of mentors and other researchers, and funding availability all help determine the focus of a future project. An additional component to be considered is whether adequate, up-to-date research has already been completed on a topic; if sufficient evidence is available in a given core area, this area might not be the best choice for another research project.

The best research topic may be one in which either little research has been done or the research to date is insufficient, inconclusive, or mixed. In addition, when research conducted to date provides a low level of evidence and is of limited quality, additional high-quality research in the area is needed.

The “Research Opportunities Table on Home Modifications” provides an overview of the state of current available evidence on interventions within the scope of occupational therapy practice. The table is based on the systematic reviews from the Occupational Therapy Practice Guidelines Series developed by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Evidence-Based Practice Project. The table lists specific interventions and indicates either that the evidence is strong to support the intervention or that moderate, mixed, or few studies support the intervention and therefore it is an area for future research. Please refer to Occupational Therapy Practice Guidelines for Home Modifications (Siebert, Smallfield, & Stark, 2014) and the American Journal of Occupational Therapy article “Systematic Review of the Effect of Home Modification and Fall Prevention Programs on Falls and the Performance of Community-Dwelling Older Adults” (Chase, Mann, Wasek, & Arbesman, 2014) for more information on the topic area and the systematic review process.

This table also is posted online for researchers to use to inform the occupational therapy community about their work. The table is linked to Google Drive and offers a place for researchers to include information on interest in initiating research, sharing recently completed and ongoing research, and sharing clinical data. It is hoped that this information will make the research planning process easier, minimize duplication of research efforts, and stimulate discussions among researchers with similar interests, which can then facilitate the creation of research networks and multisite studies. Researchers, students, and clinicians can use this information in developing innovative research to answer important...
questions within the occupational therapy field. To add current or ongoing research to the table, visit http://www.aota.org/researchopportunitiestables.

Researchers are also encouraged to enter their projects into AOTA’s Researcher Database at http://myaota.aota.org/research/. This database provides AOTA with information such as relevant clinical settings and populations, International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health level (World Health Organization, 2001), funder (if any), and key words to help guide research advocacy and policy initiatives.

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References

