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## **Practice experiences of psychosocial occupational therapists in India – A qualitative study**

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## **Abstract**

**Background:** There is a global burden of mental illness, with India bearing a disproportionate share of the burden. Occupational therapy is essential in the treatment of mental health problems at all stages of life. However, little is known about how psychosocial occupational therapy is currently practiced in India. Studies done earlier about the practice of psychosocial occupational therapy are all conducted outside of India, and there is a need to learn about occupational therapy practice in psychosocial settings in India.

**Objective:** To explore practice experiences of psychosocial occupational therapists in India.

**Method:** This study used a qualitative design with a phenomenological approach. Twelve psychosocial occupational therapists working in India with a minimum of two years of experience were recruited to participate in this study. In-depth semi-structured telephonic interviews were conducted to obtain the results.

**Results:** This study found that the role of an occupational therapist was majorly perceived to be one who gives vocational intervention by other professionals in psychiatry, which is not the only role occupational therapy plays in mental health recovery. Participants reported a number of obstacles in staying updated with evidence-based best practices, including limited staff and a lack of sufficient training among occupational therapists.

**Conclusion:** This research helped gain an insight into psychosocial occupational therapy practice in India in a variety of settings. It shed light on some of the obstacles that therapists face, as well as their recommendations for improving the state of practice.

**Key words:** Psychosocial occupational therapists, Occupational therapy practice, qualitative research, experiences.