

Promotional Material : Questionnaire and results

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During the last World Federation of Occupational Therapy (W.F.O.T.) council meeting held in Sapporo, Japan 2002, the publication committee decided to form a promotional material questionnaire. This was formulated and distributed to all delegates present during the council meeting. The aim of the questionnaire is that of having a general overview on how national associations promote Occupational Therapy in their native countries. This will help the W.F.O.T. to have a general idea on the types of promotional material that exist and how national associations promote Occupational Therapy. It is also aimed to highlight the needs/ ideas that various associations have regarding this matter.

Introduction

During the year 2001, I received 26 questionnaires back (out of 50), mainly by mail. Some were also received via e-mail.

Question 1

Do you have any promotional material in your country/ local association? Yes or No

All questionnaires received, said that they have promotional material in their country. In fact none of the responses said that they don't have any promotional material. As we shall see, these vary from one association to another. The reasons for this will also be discussed below.

Question 2

What kind of promotional materials do you have?

- **Leaflets:** The most common form of promoting OT is through the publication and distribution of leaflets. In fact, 21 out of 26 respondents publish leaflets. These are mostly published yearly, but some associations also publish them monthly and/ or quarterly. Examples are "Introducing O.T.", O.T. in general, pediatrics, geriatrics, psychiatrics, orthopedic, neurology, "Code of ethics" (OTEC), and leaflets of regional associations or specific groups.

- **Journal:** 19 responded that they promote O.T. through Journals. These are mostly being published monthly, every three months, twice a year, or on a yearly basis. Examples are “ErgoTherapy”, “AJOT” and “BJOT”.
- **Newsletter:** 17 said that they promote O.T. through newsletters. These are published on a regular basis. Examples include “OT insight”, “OT news” and seasonal newsletters (e.g. Easter and Christmas newsletters).
- **Books:** 12 associations publish books. These vary from one association to another. Financial limitations are hindering some associations in producing such books. Examples are the “Review for OT certification exam”, “How to live with a total knee replacement”, “Guidelines and standards”, “OT practice in various areas” and “Professional competence programme”. Larger associations publish a catalogue of the more recent books published.
- **Others:** The following are also used to promote O.T.: T-shirts, OT bags/ sacks, stickers, pins, mugs, post cards, notepads, openers, pens, CD, videos, and watches. Promotional packages to members are also being given to members in most associations.

Question 3

Do you have any promotional activities?

24 said that they have promotional activities. Only 2 national associations (out of 26) don't have any promotional activities. However, they are planning to do so in the near future.

Question 4

What kind of promotional activities do you have?

- **O.T. day/ month / week :** Occupational therapy day seems to be the most common form of promoting our profession. In fact 10 respondents said that they promote OT on a specific day of the year. Two associations have an O.T. month and two have an O.T. week.

- **Study mornings/ seminars:** 11 associations hold regular study mornings/ seminars for both Occupational Therapists and the general public on a regular basis.
- **Public lectures:** 7 responded that they carry out public lectures to lay persons outside the hospital.
- **Others:** Other promotional activities include: -
 - Media advertisement (TV, radio, newspapers column/ release, articles),
 - Various exhibitions
 - Workshops/ refresher courses
 - OT forum
 - OT congress/ conference
 - Through Home Page
 - Campaigns/ press conference
 - OT directory service

Question 5

What is the evaluation you made from these promotional activities?

Most of the responses were negative. In-fact many associations have not carried out research to study their effectiveness/ impact. Few associations said that they found promotional activities helpful in promoting OT, but they did not say how the research/ evaluation was carried out (the BAOT for example do a yearly report). Many mentioned that they need help in the evaluation.

The following are some comments mentioned in the questionnaire: -

- Help to increase public awareness on OT.
- Increase demand on OT services.
- Help to improve quality of life in terms of daily living activities.
- Help to keep the spirit of the O.T.'s up (serves to motivate O.T.)
- Increases number of students

Question 6

Do you find any difficulties to produce any promotional materials in your country/ local association? What are these difficulties?

- As one might expect, the main problem is financial limitations. Small associations find it hard to spend money on promotional material due to financial restrictions.
- Printing materials are expensive, therefore one is producing little or none.
- Some find it difficult to develop and produce such material.
- Lack of resources including lack of personnel.
- Lack of energy and enthusiasm from its members mainly because they all work on a voluntary basis.
- Some find it difficult to express a concept in a few words/ simple language.
- Lack of sponsorship.

Question 7

What kind of help would you need from the WFOT regarding promotional materials?

- To act as a resource center where one can get ideas from (sharing of material).
- To have samples on various promotional material and activities that are being produced in local associations.
- Information sharing on material available/ ideas– via Internet or a network.
- To produce videos/ slides/ photos on the various organizations and settings where O.T. services are available.
- To increase its (W.F.O.T.) promotional material e.g. having more posters, a better home page and more books.
- Some wish that W.F.O.T. upgrade its homepage on a regular basis and make it more attractive.
- On the other hand, few associations said they don't need help from W.F.O.T.

Question 8

What is the budget you would allocate to promotional materials?

National associations are spending more money on promotional materials, however this varies according to their yearly budget. Large associations spend much more compared to smaller associations.

Question 9

What do you wish to produce in the future?

Many associations wish to produce a lot of promotional material, but this is limited due to lack of funds. Many wish to produce a video, to publish leaflets, to create a website and to publish more cards and other commercial items. Associations also wish to be able to give a promotional package to new members. A particular association said that they wish to see a "White paper" on what OT's do and where (type of setting) they work..

Question 10

Language

Preferably the use of the native language will reach a wider spectrum of people.

Conclusion

The above report is a summary of the questionnaires received from 26 national associations. Many points and ideas came out from this exercise which I hope, will help to create an insight on how important it is to promote our profession. Of course, there are many problems in doing so, especially when the national associations are small and have little resources.

I hope that this report will be discussed in the publication committee again in the next council meeting to determine the next step. The possibility of a follow up can be done, however, in doing so we need your help/ support. Do not hesitate to contact us on this matter.