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## The Role of Occupational Therapy in Pressure Ulcer Care: An Educational Program for Therapy Practitioners

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# The Role of Occupational Therapy in Pressure Ulcer Care: An Educational Program for Therapy Practitioners

Melody Brown, OTD Candidate



## Introduction & Background

Occupational therapists play an important role in wound prevention and management. They provide a unique perspective focused on holistic and client-centered care. Pressure ulcers are a common occurrence within hospital facilities, creating costly expenses for the facility and poor outcomes for the patients who develop them. More than 2.5 million patients per year will develop a pressure injury, and 60,000 of those patients will die because of their pressure injury. Over 25 billion dollars will be spent by hospital systems for the treatment of pressure injuries. Occupational therapists are the only members of the care team who lower readmission rates without increasing hospital spending. Their skills and perspective are vital to assist reducing the number of hospital acquired pressure injuries. The areas of specialization for this capstone are program development and education. The area of focus is wound management. The capstone experience will investigate ways to emphasize the role of occupational therapy as a part of the multidisciplinary team.

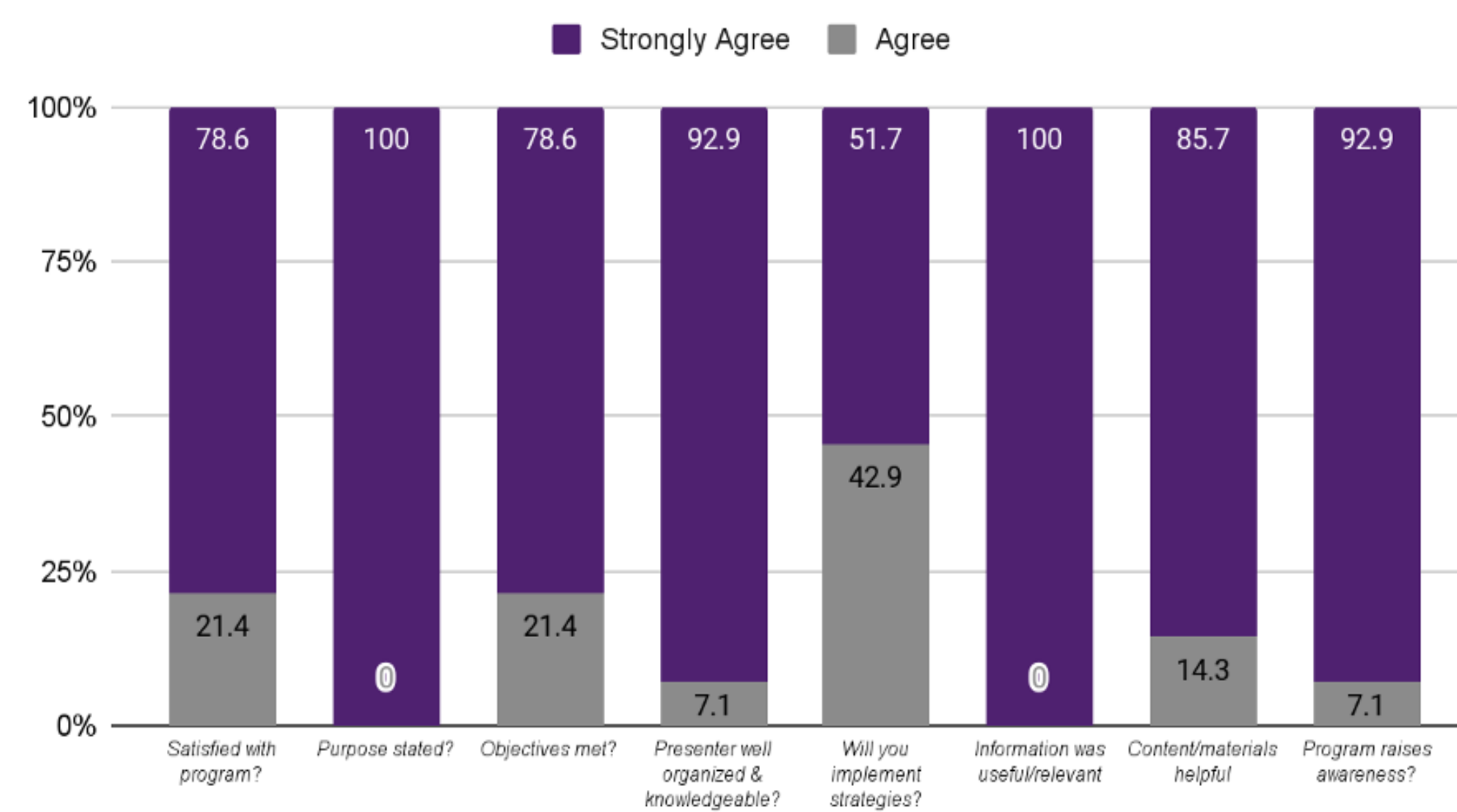
## The Project

The overall capstone experience will strive to improve the quality of care being provided by enhancing the therapy role in pressure ulcer prevention and management to foster increased multidisciplinary communication and improved patient care. The project aims to address occupational therapy's role in wound care, specifically during the inpatient rehabilitation hospital stay. Occupational therapy practitioners will be integrated into the team by gaining specialized education and implementing intervention approaches to assist with pressure ulcer care. The capstone experience will include participation and observation of in-depth wound care. Information will be gathered about site-specific practices, available resources, and the current needs of the facility. An educational staff development program will be developed and provided to the therapy practitioners that will be personalized to meet site-specific needs. A pre-test/post-test will be given to measure the effectiveness of the program, along with receiving post-program feedback. Along with the program, a daily offloading/repositioning seating schedule will be created and implemented to increase the consistency of turning procedures with each at-risk patient. Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Abilene will observe Worldwide Pressure Injury Awareness Day on November 16th for the first time, which will be open to all hospital staff and will provide educational activities for both nursing and therapy staff to raise multidisciplinary expectations of pressure ulcer care. The purpose of the project is to develop and implement educational strategies that will assist with decreasing the prevalence of pressure injuries at the facility and will improve patient outcomes by strengthening the delivery of quality care.

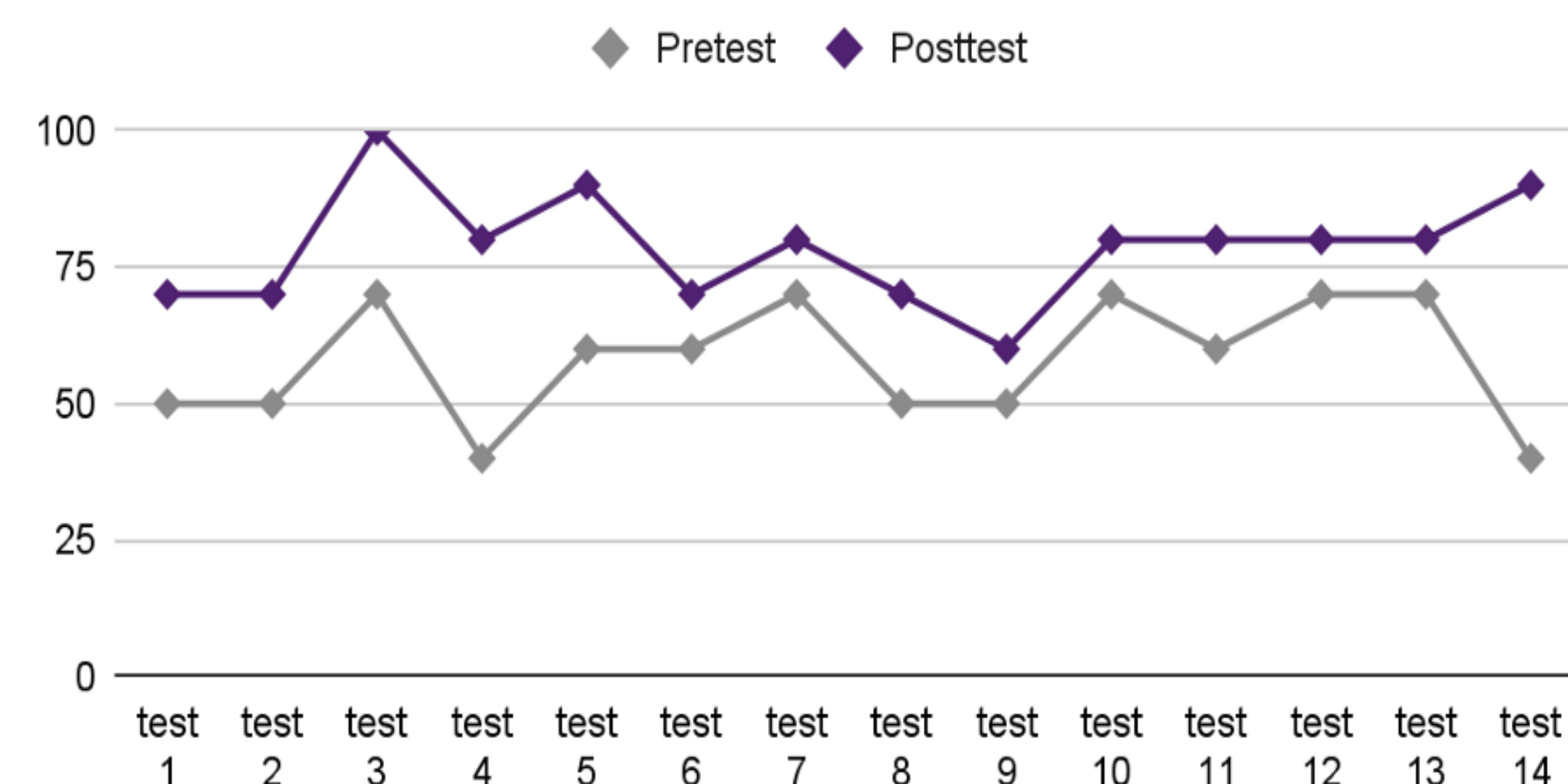
## Program Development

Multiple SWOT analysis interviews were conducted with various stakeholders at the facility. The common themes across all disciplines included a need for more staff and patient education, more consistency with documentation, a greater need for follow-through with tasks, improved utilization of equipment, and an increase in multidisciplinary communication. Facility wound care inventory was tracked in various locations across the site. The main places supplies were kept were central supply, the supply closes, the wound care office/cart, and the therapy gym. A complete list was created to identify the resources available and determine what resources were being underutilized. A practice questionnaire survey was given to therapy staff to gain an understanding of their current wound management knowledge and investigate their concerns and needs in this area. Based on the results of this survey, the therapy staff had a desire for more education and demonstrated a need for foundational pressure ulcer prevention and management education.

Feedback Form Results



Pre/Posttest Scores



## Project Outcomes

After collecting data from the needs assessment interviews, facility inventory, and staff surveys, a program was created based on the responses, needs of the facility, staff experience, and baseline knowledge. The topics included general pressure ulcer information, facility guidelines, quality of life, outcomes, importance, therapy involvement, multidisciplinary communication, documentation, educational resources, and interventions. An offloading/repositioning schedule was also implemented, and staff were educated on examples of how to incorporate schedule into daily therapy routine. A pretest was administered the week before the program, and a posttest was administered the week after the program to check for recall and synthesis of program material. To analyze the responses in the pretest/posttest, a two-sample t-test was utilized. The results of this test indicated a statistically significant difference in scores from pretest to posttest because  $p < .05$ . Post-program feedback was also gathered to identify staff satisfaction with the program and probability of utilization and implementation of information learned.

## Discussion & Impact

Based on the outcome results, the program was a success and provided an increase in the knowledge of the therapy staff. Prior to the beginning of the capstone, various therapy staff members had expressed a desire to learn more about the basics of wound care and were searching for opportunities to become more involved as a part of the wound prevention and management team. After the program was administered, the staff were more observant of wound practices, began to ask more questions, and more consistently engaged in multidisciplinary communication and collaboration. The educational program provided the therapy staff with foundational knowledge to build upon as they strive to bring their wound rate down permanently. The site was equipped and instructed on ways to raise awareness for pressure injuries and staff received knowledge and expectations of how to improve their skills. As the site continues to work on improvement in this area, they will be able to reflect on the material developed throughout the capstone experience. Occupational therapy has a broad scope of practice and are essential members of the multidisciplinary team.

## References

