Barriers to integration of spirituality and spiritual care in occupational therapy education in a South African context

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FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.

Overview

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussion
- Recommendations
- Conclusion

Introduction

- Spirituality and spiritual care in healthcare professions including occupational therapy
- Spiritual aspects in patient care seems to improve the quality of life, health and well-being of patients and their families (World Health Organizations, 2015)
- Spirituality and spiritual care in education is not a simple matter due to various challenges
- Neglected in practice due to barriers at an educational-level (Schoepp, 2005; Bingimlas, 2009)

Literature Review

- Significant discussions in health sciences education is the integration of spirituality in health

- Research on the teaching of spirituality in medical schools in other countries (Lucchetti et al., 2013; Lucchetti et al., 2012; Peach 2003)

- Occupational therapy educators and students as they struggle to integrate spirituality at an educational level (Thompson & MacNeal, 2006; Wilding, 2002)

- In South Africa little is known about the barriers preventing integration of spirituality and spiritual care in teaching and learning in occupational therapy education (Mthembu et al., 2015)

Research Aim

- The aim of the study was to explore and describe the barriers impeding the integration of spirituality and spiritual care in occupational therapy education
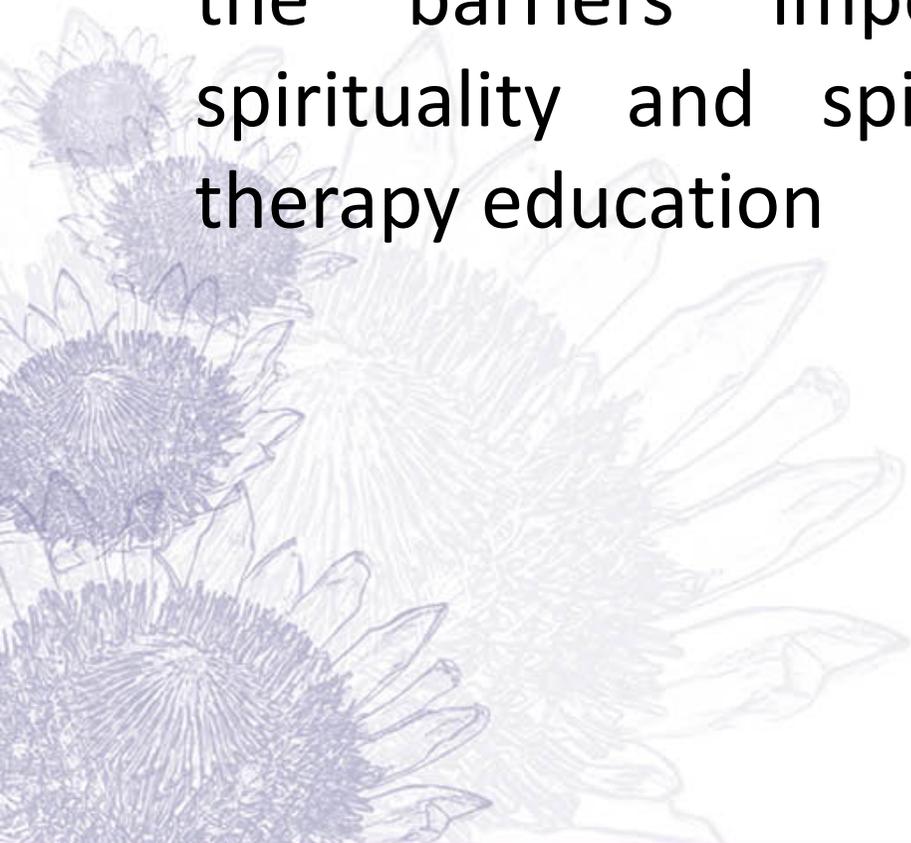
Methodology

Worldview → Interpretivism

Approach → Qualitative Research → Exploratory-Descriptive Design

Participants Selection → Data Collection → Data Analysis

Trustworthiness

Strategy	Criteria and Applicability
Credibility	Member checking with educators and students Triangulation use of multiple sources Peer debriefing with other two authors
Transferability	Nominate sample using purposive Audit trail Thick description
Dependability	Audit trail Thick description
Confirmability	Audit trail

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Ethical statement

- Ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee
- Participation was voluntary
- Informed participants about the study
- Anonymity and confidentiality

Findings

Themes	Categories
Barriers to teaching spirituality in the classroom	**Lack of knowledge in the area of spirituality** **Not explicit about it** **I think time is a barrier** Importance of spirituality in occupational therapy Running the risk of losing it
Barriers to spirituality at personal level	Educators' personal experiences Students' personal experiences Stressful situations in life

Themes	Categories
Barriers to spirituality in the classroom	Lack of knowledge in the area of spirituality
	Not explicit about it
	I think time is a barrier
	Running the risk of losing it

"I think as occupational therapists we firstly need to understand what spirituality is and know which components we will be looking at to understand the term spirituality maybe then also know our spirituality. " (Third-year student 13).

"The students do consider it but they are not explicit about it" (Educator 4).

"It's got that sense of vagueness to it. And you are not really sure. I think that's why I found it difficult to approach that part of people" (Third-year student 15).

"Conversations around spirituality take time, you can spend a two hour tutorial talking about spirituality and there isn't always time for those conversations" (Educator 5)

"Talking about infusing it, I fully think we might infuse it but sometimes when things are infused we run the risk of losing them" (Educator 1)

Themes	Categories
Barriers to spirituality at personal level	Educators' personal experiences
	Students' personal experiences
	Stressful situations in life

"The level of trust for people to be able to talk about spirituality involves feelings, however, we share them with people that we trust and if we feel people might not understand or people might see it differently or even worse, argue against my own beliefs then we are not going to feel that we can share, and it must be the same for students too" (Educator 1)

"It depends on the maturity of the students, their openness for discussion. Students grapple with their spiritual beliefs which include religion and values, just reflecting back on past experience" (Educator 4)

"The amount of stress regarding overstepping boundaries is a sensitive one, am I gone be punished. If it happens that you treat a client with different spirituality to yours. You not gonna change your own religion and spirituality" (Third-year student 9)

Discussion

- The barriers that we have identified provide insights into how to integrate spirituality in teaching and learning in the classroom

- Educators and Students were considering spirituality; however, they were struggling to be explicit about this concept

- Lack of time to be a barrier that impeded occupational therapists from considering spirituality and spiritual care

- Educators and students perceived that personal factors and stressful situations in life inhibited infusion of spirituality in education

Recommendations

- Educators and students need to be aware of their values, beliefs, culture, religion and spirituality

- Educators should create safe and supportive environment to facilitate teaching and learning about spirituality and spiritual care in the classroom

Conclusion

The barriers impeding the integration of spirituality and spiritual care in occupational therapy education

Conceptual understanding of spirituality in classroom teaching

Educators and students raised concerns related to lack of knowledge, own beliefs, overstepping boundaries, generation gap, trust and diversity.

Findings enhanced understanding and insight into the barriers preventing the integration of spirituality and spiritual care in education in classroom.

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Thank You