

## International fieldwork placements: Enhancing clinical reasoning via intercultural immersion in developing countries



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**Background.** As part of their graduate-level training programs, many occupational therapy students choose to complete fieldwork placements in developing countries.

**Purpose.** Investigate the influence of international fieldwork training in developing countries on the acquisition of clinical reasoning skills- the ways occupational therapists think about, plan, and evaluate what they do to help people. **Methods.** Eight graduate Canadian occupational therapists participated in a phenomenological interview designed to elicit reflections on the experience of training in international practice contexts and their development of clinical reasoning skills. **Findings.** Analysis demonstrated that the unique practice challenges characteristic of resource-limited environments, in conjunction with the restrictions of remote supervision, compelled students to adopt partnership strategies to meet their goals of professional development and meaningful contributions to communities. Students fostered their clinical reasoning ability, enhanced their capacity to plan sustainable interventions and acquired nuanced culturally-informed skills. **Implications.** International placements offer superior learning opportunities for students to acquire the competence to practice in diverse, challenging occupational therapy practices. Graduate occupational therapy programs ought to prioritize and fund international fieldwork education.