

Development of Occupational Therapy in China Mainland Opportunities and Challenges

The concept of rehabilitation was introduced into China Mainland around the early 1980's. Then the first national Occupational Therapy room was set up in the Chinese Rehabilitation Reach Center in the capital city-Beijing in 1988. In the last three decades, the Chinese government has been paying more and more attention and investment into the development of Rehabilitation Medicine. There are a variety of Rehabilitation Therapy education programmes which include OT subjects all over the China mainland now. A lot of rehabilitation therapists provide occupational therapy services which mainly focus on hospital setting.

The challenges we are facing now: 1. there are only two Occupational Therapy education programmes approved by WFOT in China mainland. The other programmes have not been separated into PT and OT, and the total teaching hours for OT subjects is only about 80 hours. 2. There is a lack of qualified OT teachers both in the lecture and clinical field. 3. The teaching outcomes of Rehab Therapy programmes are more emphasized on the technician level rather than professional level. 4. As the result of the above, the occupational therapy services provided mainly focus on remedial activities rather than task orientated and client centered approaches. 5. Most of the Rehabilitation Therapy Associations are led by rehabilitation doctors. There is no national Occupational Therapist Association right now. We still need advocacy and promotion for the development of OT in China mainland. In this presentation I will share some of the current challenges, our vision for OT in the China mainland and ask for ideas of how our international colleagues can help us bring our vision to fruition.



Guohui Lin is a Rehab Doctor and a Hong Kong registered Occupational Therapist. He works in the Rehab Department of Guangzhou Rehabilitation Center for People with Disability in Guangzhou –the capital city of Guangdong Province of P R China. Because of his unique educational background and experiences, he has been invited to teach in the subject and topics of Occupational Therapy in different kind of Rehab Therapist educational programmes in different Universities, continuing educational programmes and conferences all over China mainland. And he has the chance to observe a variety of Occupational Therapy settings. In promoting the Occupational Therapy as a profession in China, he is one of the creators of the first government registered Occupational Therapist Association in China Mainland-The Guangdong Occupational Therapist Association. The main goals of the association are to facility the process of development and internationalization of Occupational Therapy as a profession, and improve the quality of Occupational Therapy services and educational outcomes in China Mainland.