

## Impact of COVID-19 on Occupational Therapy Professionals

### **Abstract:**

**Background:** COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the lives of many people including health care professionals. The rapid spread and increased infections have affected the practice of occupational therapy forcing them to rethink their ways of practice to maintain their safety and that of their clientele.

**Objective:** This study is conducted to assess the impact of COVID 19 on the Kenyan occupational therapy professionals

**Hypothesis:** COVID 19 pandemic has had economic and clinical impact on occupational therapy professionals in various clinical settings.

**Method:** An electronic google questionnaire link was shared through emailed and/or WhatsApp to occupational therapy professionals to explore the impact of COVID 19 in various clinical areas.

**Analysis:** The unidentified google questionnaire data was extracted into an excel spreadsheet and analyzed using descriptive statistics and pivot table to answer questions of the impact of COVID -19 on occupational therapy

**Results:** A total of 55 responses were received, 58.5% males and 38% females, representing clinicians, managers, educators, and students. Approximately 39% of the participants reported having tested positive for COVID-19. 65.5% reported to have developed symptoms but were not hospitalized. Overwhelming majority (90%) reported that COVID-19 negatively impacted their practice. 58% reported missing work, 26% lost wages, and 51.9% continued to lack PPE. The participants reported that COVID-19 has resulted in decrease in patient load, loss of income, layoff, decreased in person-to-person provider patient interactions, and increased lockdowns. 87% reported to have implemented changes which included use of telehealth, social distancing, adaptive scheduling, limiting group therapy, cancelling and rescheduling, as well as sanitizing of equipments in between treatment sessions to minimize risk of COVID-19 virus transmissions. 64.8% reported that their employers are committed to protecting them and the patients from COVID-19 infections; 58.5% reported being satisfied at their current employment; and 79.6% indicated that they will continue to practice occupational therapy at their current practice settings.

**Conclusion:** COVID-19 impacted occupational therapy professionals across all clinical practice settings and were forced to implement several strategies to minimize risk of transmitting the virus while providing the highly needed care to their clients.