Enabling appropriate personnel skill-mix for progressive realization of equitable access to assistive technology


Rehabilitation Sciences, GF Strong Rehabilitation Research Program, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada; School of Allied Health, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland; University of Sunshine Coast, Sunshine Coast, Australia; School of Nursing, Midwifery & Health Systems Health Sciences Centre, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland; CECOPS CIC, Buckinghamshire, UK; School of Occupational Therapy, Western University, London, Canada; World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland; Argentine Assistive Technology Association, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Department of Physiotherapy, University of Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa; AIAS Bologna onlus, Bologna, Italy; Cochrane Global Ageing, Glasgow, UK; The Department of Kinesiology and Community Health, College of Applied Health Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL, USA; College of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda; Department of Health Professions, Swinburne University, Hawthorn, Australia; World Federation of Occupational Therapists, London, UK; Assisting Living & Learning (ALL) Institute, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Ireland; Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden; Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Coruña, A Coruña, Spain; Centre for Rehabilitation Studies, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa; Geisinger Health System, Danville, CA, USA

ABSTRACT

Background and Methods: This paper reviews the current capacity of personnel in enabling access to assistive technology (AT) as well as the systems and processes within which they work, and was reviewed, discussed, and refined during and following the Global Research, Innovation, and Education in Assistive Technology (GREAT) Summit.

Findings: Key concepts addressed include a person-centred team approach; sustainability indicators to monitor, measure, and respond to needs for service design and delivery; education, research, and training for competent practice, using the six rehab-workforce challenges framework; and credentialing frameworks. We propose development of a competence framework and associated education and training programs, and development and implementation of a certification framework for AT personnel.

Conclusions: There is a resolve to address the challenges faced by People globally to access assistive technology. Context specific needs assessment is required to understand the AT Personnel landscape, to shape and strengthen credentialing frameworks through competencies and certification, acknowledging both general and specific skill mix requirements.

IMPLICATIONS FOR REHABILITATION

- Personnel in assistive technology (AT) provision should be trained using a person-centred team approach, which emphasizes appropriate skill-mix to address multiple needs within the community.
- Sustainability indicators should be used which allow personnel to monitor, measure and respond to needs for service design and delivery.
- A competence framework with associated education and training program, coupled with the development and implementation of a certification framework for AT personnel needs, will promote quality in AT personnel training globally.

Part A: assistive technology personnel context

Introduction

The United Nations “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” (CRPD) requires governments to meet the assistive technology (AT) needs of citizens [1]. To achieve this requirement, Member States need to undertake a needs assessment and progressively work towards enacting legislation, developing policies, procurement and provision systems, building work-force capacity, and promoting AT product availability and advancement, through stakeholder engagement in research, education and training.

Furthermore, Tebbutt et al. illustrate how the achievement of each of the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) can be facilitated using assistive products [2]. They argued that “without promoting the availability of assistive products the SDGs cannot be achieved equitably [2]”. Tebbutt et al. highlight how assistive products are considered both a mediator and a moderator of SDG achievement. To this end, the World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes the importance of access to assistive technologies, as...