Checkpoints

1. What are the typical work responsibilities of physical therapists?

Physical therapists review patients’ medical histories, evaluate patients’ physical abilities and conditions, and develop treatment plans. Either they or physical therapist assistants may carry out the plans. In either case, physical therapists monitor patients’ progress during treatment. They reevaluate patients periodically and modify the treatment plans when necessary. Physical therapists may also perform a systems review to determine whether patients need physical therapy.

2. What personal characteristics should a physical therapist assistant have?

Physical therapist assistants need empathy, patience, a positive attitude, good people skills, good communication skills, good organizational skills, attention to detail, and good teamwork skills.

3. What are the typical work responsibilities of occupational therapists?

Occupational therapists screen patients to determine whether they need occupational therapy, gather and analyze data, develop intervention plans, implement the plans, document patients’ progress, reassess the plans periodically, and modify them as needed. When treatment ends, occupational therapists prepare written summaries of the treatment process and outcomes, sometimes with recommendations for follow-up services.
4. What education and training are needed to become an occupational therapy assistant?

Typically, occupational therapy assistants need a two-year associate’s degree from an accredited occupational therapy assistant program.

5. What are the typical work responsibilities of respiratory therapists?

Respiratory therapists provide respiratory care for patients with heart and lung disorders. They perform diagnostic tests and evaluate the results; help prepare and modify the plan of care; administer oxygen, aerosol medications, and many other types of treatment; monitor the patient’s responses; and manage the patient’s overall respiratory care. While they work under a physician’s direction, respiratory therapists are in charge of all respiratory care diagnostic procedures and therapeutic treatments.

6. What are the typical work responsibilities of massage therapists?

Massage therapists massage patients to relax soft tissues, increase circulation in the massaged areas, warm the tissues, and reduce pain. They use different modalities and types of massage. In addition to lotions or oils, therapists may apply ice or compresses, use an infrared lamp or whirlpool bath, or employ other tools. A session can include recommendations for self-care. Other duties include scheduling sessions, developing treatment plans, and maintaining client records. Therapists who own their own businesses need to perform business-related tasks.

Review Questions

Matching

Match the procedure with the occupation that typically performs it.
1. Develop an intervention plan to improve everyday life skills
   a. Physical therapist

2. Perform a pulmonary function test
   b. Physical therapist assistant

3. Teach a patient to walk with a prosthetic leg
   c. Occupational therapist

4. Use acupressure
   d. Respiratory therapist

5. Develop a treatment plan to restore function
   e. Massage therapist

Multiple Choice

6. The entry-level educational requirement for physical therapists will probably soon be ___.
   a. an associate’s degree
   b. a bachelor’s degree
   c. a master’s degree
   d. a doctoral degree

7. Physical therapist assistants ____.
   a. carry out treatment plans
   b. can perform all physical therapy procedures
   c. usually work without supervision
   d. develop intervention plans

8. Which person is least likely to be an occupational therapist’s client?
a. An older adult driver

b. A teenager with asthma

c. A man who lost a hand in a car accident

d. A woman who’s depressed

9. Which statement about occupational therapy assistants is NOT true?
   a. They typically have an associate’s degree.
   b. They can perform many of the same tasks as occupational therapists.
   c. Their most common role is to gather client data.
   d. They are represented by the American Occupational Therapy Association.

10. Which is NOT a typical job responsibility of respiratory therapists?
   a. Perform range-of-motion exercises on a patient
   b. Monitor patients in an ICU
   c. Educate patients and families
   d. Be part of a rapid-response team

Completion

11. Rehabilitation is the restoration, after a disease or injury, of the ability to function in a normal or near-normal manner.

12. In occupational therapy, another term for occupation is purposeful activity.

13. The most common type of test performed by a respiratory therapist is spirometry, a test in which a patient breathes into a machine to test lung function.

14. Massage therapy is the manipulation of muscles and other soft tissues to maintain or improve health.
15. **Polysomnography**, the diagnosis of sleep disorders, is one of the fastest-growing specialties in respiratory therapy.

Short Answer

16. Compare and contrast the work of physical therapists and occupational therapists.

**Physical therapists work with physical problems that impair people’s ability to move.** The goals of physical therapy are to restore function, improve mobility, relieve pain, and prevent or limit physical disabilities. **Occupational therapists help people develop, regain, or improve life skills.**

17. Compare and contrast the typical job responsibilities of physical therapist assistants and occupational therapy assistants.

The typical job responsibilities of physical therapist assistants and occupational therapy assistants are quite similar. Both work under the supervision of therapists. **Both carry out treatment or intervention plans.** Both write progress notes and communicate regularly with the supervising therapist. **Occupational therapy assistants may have a greater variety of job responsibilities than physical therapist assistants, however.**

18. Describe three areas in which respiratory therapists can specialize.

**Answers may vary, but students should describe three of the following:** continuing and long-term care, critical care, diagnostics, disease management, home care, pediatrics, and pulmonary rehabilitation.

19. What kind of preparation is needed to become a massage therapist?
Most massage therapists complete a formal training program typically lasting 500 hours or more. Most states regulate massage therapy, usually requiring therapists to complete a state-approved formal education program and pass a national certification exam or a state exam.

20. All the occupations described in this chapter are growing rapidly. What is a common factor driving demand for these occupations?

A common factor driving demand for all these occupations is the increasing number of older adults, who are more likely to suffer chronic medical problems requiring therapy and rehabilitation.