

# Evidence-Based Practice Resources Health and Wellness

Marian Arbesman Deborah Lieberman

**H**ealth and wellness have played an important role in occupational therapy since the profession's inception. At that time, occupational therapists used valued occupations to improve the health of people with a variety of disabilities. Over time, the focus on health and wellness

has shifted slightly, taking on two new paths. One is the importance of occupational therapy in the prevention of disease. The second is the need for occupational therapy practitioners to be aware of innovative and emerging areas of practice related to health and wellness. The American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA's) Centennial Vision has highlighted the importance of all three paths by designating Health and Wellness as one of the six broad overarching areas of practice for occupational therapy practitioners.

Alignment with the Centennial Vision also emphasizes excellence in practice that is informed by evidence. With the growth of the Internet, it becomes difficult for practitioners to know which wellness treatments really work, and which are hype based on clever marketing or, at best, some anecdotal evidence. Recent updates to AOTA's EBP Resource Directory, available in the Evidence Based Practice and Research section of the AOTA Web site ([www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org)) should make the process of finding and accessing relevant Internet resources much easier. To access the EBP Resource Directory, click on Practitioners or Educators-Researchers, and then on Evidence-Based Practice and Research. The Health and Wellness EBP Resources can be found in the



Selected EBP Resources section of the EBP Resource Directory. You will need to log in as an AOTA member to access this information.

The evidence-based practice (EBP) resources in the Resource Directory accommodate the varied and wide range of age groups and clinical conditions that fall within the area of health and wellness. Those interested in aging and health, for example, can find evidence-based resources at AgeSource Worldwide, Arthritis Intervention Program, and Home Modification and Info Clearinghouse. For those working with persons with chronic fatigue syndrome, an evidence-based continuing education curriculum, *CFS: A Primer for Allied Health Professionals*, is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For those with an interest in mental health, the National

Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) from SAMHSA has summaries of evidence-based programs in substance

use and tobacco control. In addition, it has information on the Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives for Seniors (PEARLS) for those 60 years old and above who are experiencing mild depression.

Web sites recently added to AOTA's EBP Resource Directory provide evidence-based resources for innovative existing and emerging areas of practice, and for those emphasizing prevention. For example, *Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults* can be downloaded at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) at NIH. For those working with children,

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NHLBI has materials available for WE CAN!—Ways to Enhance Children's Activity and Nutrition, an evidence-based, and community-based program to combat obesity by improving food choices, increasing physical activity, and reducing screen time.

Information on other emerging areas of practice in health and wellness is located at the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, also at NIH. The A-Z Health topics provide evidence-based information and research results on a variety of treatments and clinical conditions. Of interest to occupational therapy practitioners is information on tai chi and yoga. Another Web site, The Center for the Study of Yoga and Health—Evidence-Based Yoga, has a bibliography of evidence-based articles pertaining to yoga.

The Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine houses the Cochrane CAM Field, the branch of the Cochrane Collaboration that produces systematic reviews and meta-analyses related to complementary and alternative medicine. An alphabetical listing of nearly 400 systematic reviews produced by the Cochrane CAM field is available at the site, and includes topics related to energy therapies, body-based methods, and mind-body interventions. Abstracts of the summaries of a selected review can then be downloaded from the Cochrane Collaboration site, also

available at the EBP Resource Directory. A number of consumer summaries of Cochrane reviews organized by clinical condition are available directly at the Cochrane CAM Field site. Included on the site are evidence-based reviews of interventions for autism, mental health, arthritis, and cancer.

Regardless of whether you work in an existing or emerging area of health and wellness, the EBP Resource Directory Web sites included in this article easily provide useful and valuable information to inform, guide, and foster the provision of occupational therapy services from an evidence-based perspective. Accessing the information from these sites and determining how to incorporate the findings into your clinical expertise is a welcome challenge that should be embraced by all practitioners working with people of all ages interested in improving or maintaining their health and wellness. ■

**Marian Arbesman**, PhD, OTR/L, is president of ArbesIdeas, Inc., and a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Science at the State University of New York at Buffalo. She has served as a consultant with AOTA's Evidence-Based Practice Project since 1999.

**Deborah Lieberman**, MHSA, OTR/L, FAOTA, is the program director of AOTA's Evidence-Based Practice Project and staff liaison to the Commission on Practice.

## **PERSPECTIVES**

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fatality rates population-wide. Recognizing larger groups of individuals and populations is consistent with the enhanced definition of client to include people, organizations, and populations.<sup>3</sup>

For more information about child passenger safety, attendance at a child passenger safety course offered through SafeKids USA ([www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)) is recommended, along with the follow-up course for securing children with special needs. Occupational therapy practitioners who are interested in this practice area and in professional development guidance should look to the competencies

and criteria for AOTA specialty certification in driving and community mobility ([www.aota.org/Practitioners/ProfDev/Certification.aspx](http://www.aota.org/Practitioners/ProfDev/Certification.aspx)). ■

### **References**

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**Wendy Stav**, PhD, OTR/L, SCDCM, FAOTA, is an assistant professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science at Towson University in Maryland.