

# What is the evidence relating to the role of Occupational Therapist, in Addressing Sexual intimacy in Physical Health Settings: A Scoping Review

The aim of this scoping review is to explore the evidence on the factors that promote or inhibit OT's addressing sexuality within physical health settings.

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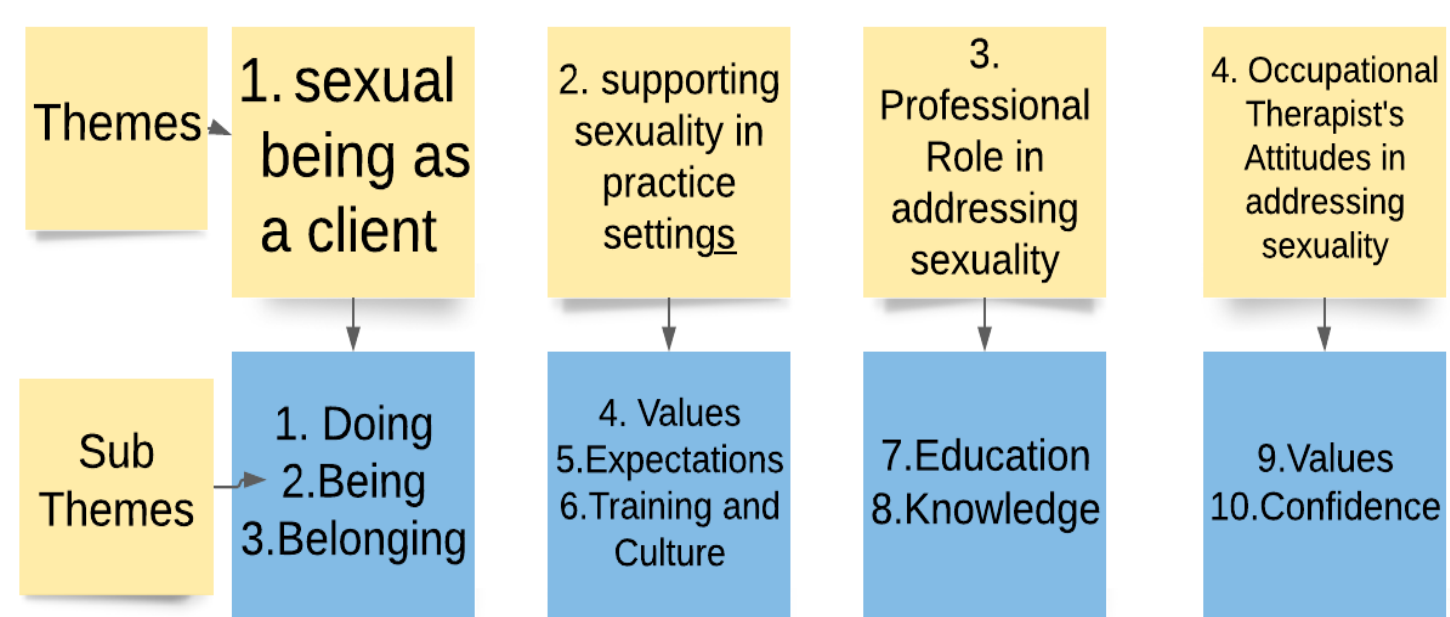
## Abstract

Sexuality is a central aspect for many individuals regardless of age, gender, disability or culture, rarely addressed in occupational therapy (OT); despite the fact that the role of OT is to support individuals with various limitations to engage in meaningful occupations. Therefore, a better understanding of the factors that influence addressing sexuality and addressing challenges within, is likely to contribute to patient health and wellbeing.

## Method

Three databases were searched using terms:

Occupational Therapy or Occupational Therapist AND Sexuality or sexual behavior (Thesaurus terms) or phycosexual behavior (thesaurus terms). The Preferred Reported Items in Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis (PRISMA) flowchart (Tricco et al., 2018) was used to sort through the articles.

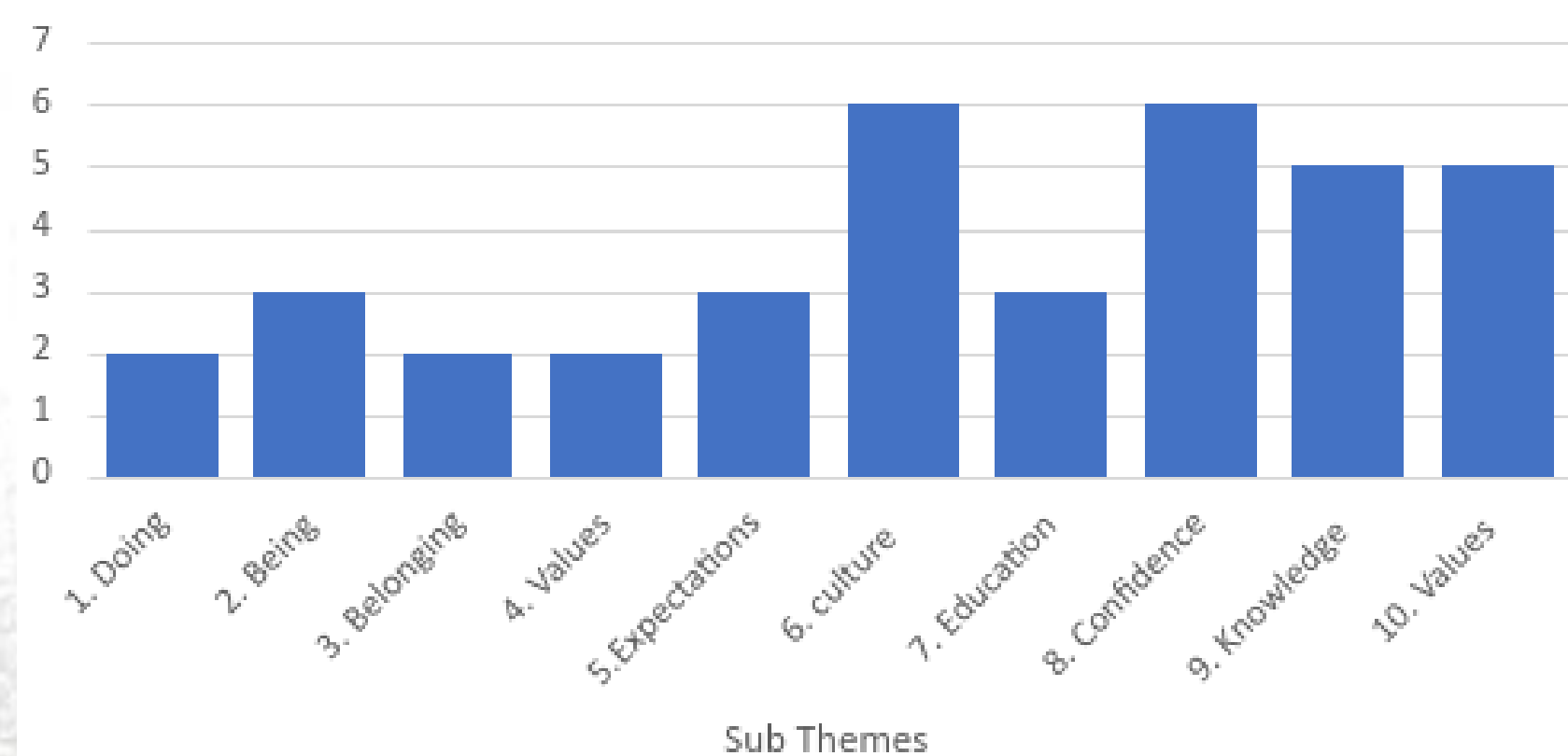


## Results

A total of 12 articles were included out of a total of 75 identified.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the 12 articles and 4 themes and 9 sub-themes were identified. The themes related to: Sexual being as a client, supporting sexuality in practice settings, professional role in addressing sexuality and OT's attitudes in addressing sexuality.

Number of articles by Theme



## Conclusion

This review has highlighted challenges experienced by OTs when addressing sexuality within physical health settings. Highlighting links between limited knowledge in sexuality and low confidence for OTs in discussions with services users concerning sexuality. Therefore, it is crucial to address the lack of opportunities in education for professionals seeking more knowledge to address sexuality within physical healthcare settings to promote discussions and person-centred care.

## Future Implications/Recommendations

- Team training
- Discussions through MDT meetings
- Signage and posters
- Ensure safe and private environments are available for service users to discuss challenges in sexuality and sexual intimacy challenges
- Keeping skills and knowledge up to date through current professional portfolios (HCPC, 2013)
- Remaining within the scope of OT practice

## References

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