“The Evidence Says, We Do…” Upper Limb Bimanual Therapy for Children/ Young People with Acquired Brain Injury

Amy Wright, Lorna Wades & Gemma Kelly

Background

- The aim is to describe evidence for upper limb bimanual therapy and the implications for an Occupational Therapist (OT) working with children/young people (CYP) with acquired brain injury (ABI).
- The Royal College of Occupational Therapists’ standards outline that occupational therapy should be underpinned by evidence-based practice.
- OT’s have a duty to embed this in day to day practice in order to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Evidence suggests that bimanual upper limb training encourages the use of the affected hand within bimanual tasks (Charles and Gordon, 2006).

The evidence says...

- Capture functional activity, goal directed training in bimanual work.
- Deliver bimanual therapy frequently through motivating activities throughout the day.
- Higher dosage gets greater results, (Sakzewski, Provan et al. 2015).
- The involvement of the family helps increase the dosage provided outside therapy sessions.
- Knowledge translation plays an important role in ensuring the CYP, family and support staff understand the child’s level of ability and how to adapt tasks to be challenging yet successful.

We do...

- Collaborate in assessment and treatment planning with physiotherapists. For example, we use an upper limb assessment form and outcome measures such as the Goal Attainment Scaling (The GAS-Light Model) to monitor change.
- Implement a bimanual programme which includes a range of frequently used functional activities related to the child’s goals. We adapt the task according to level of abilities.
- Work collaboratively by teaching the child, family and support staff to improve knowledge translation and include upper limb bimanual therapy in everyday life.

Future Directions

- Link in with the National Upper Limb Rehabilitation Network that is being set-up by Dr Anne Gordon, Senior Consultant Occupational Therapist.
- Include patient involvement in future research.

References

- Professional standard of occupational therapy practice (The Royal College of Occupational Therapists, 2017)