



Home Environment Simulation as an Alternative to Home Assessment

Background: Occupational Therapy home assessments have historically formed a core component of discharge planning in inpatient rehabilitation services. However, significant associated resource consumption (inclusive of administration and travel requirements), has encouraged exploration of opportunities to address select environment-linked goals, within a facility setting.

Aim: To explore facility-based home environment simulation as an alternative to home assessment.

Method: Data on existing home assessment practices was collected and analysed to establish priority simulation space components. Onsite trade assistance was secured for design and construction support. Clinician and consumer feedback was sought during design, trial and refinement.

Results: Home assessments (n=50) utilised an average of 167 minutes of clinician time. Two-thirds of this time was consumed by travel/transportation (59 minutes) and planning/documentation (59 minutes) combined. 14% of home assessments had a primary objective of step or functional transfer assessment/re-training.



"More safe and more confident to get in and out"
(consumer feedback)

Data and feedback supported the design and introduction of a simulation space inclusive of modifiable bathroom components and customised steps. Consumer self-rated confidence levels, in functional transfers, have shown improvement, post simulation space use.

Significance of findings to allied health:

Interim results indicate opportunity for a reduction in volume of home assessments required – specifically those with a transfer assessment/re-training focus, via substitution with simulation space use. Simulation space utilisation may therefore positively impact resource consumption (time and vehicle), whilst also providing greater opportunity for clinicians to tailor facility-based therapy sessions to each individual consumer. Further data collection is indicated.

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