

# Current Research Priorities for UK Occupational Physicians and Occupational Health Researchers: A Modified Delphi Study

Lalloo et al. (2018)

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## For which topic were research priorities identified?

occupational health

## In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

Europe - United Kingdom

## Why was it conducted at all?

Studies identifying national occupational health (OH) research priorities have been conducted in several countries to establish where OH research should be focused and where funding should be targeted. However, the UK findings are now over 20 years old, and OH practice is continuously evolving. Research plays a pivotal role in progressing the evidence base for clinical practice in many specialties, including occupational health (OH). An increasingly multidisciplinary specialty, OH has been evolving in recent decades with technological advances and changes in work practices/patterns, customer/workforce needs and working population demographics. Consequently, a shift of interest has occurred with a changing focus on health conditions associated with technological advances and the changing workplace, including biopsychosocial factors. In contrast to historical focus on reduction of traditional occupational diseases, the health benefit of 'good' work is now recognised with an increased emphasis on promoting health, well being and improving retention and functioning of people at work. Increasingly, healthcare practitioners, researchers and policymakers are recognising the importance of the workplace as a forum for influencing health behaviours, of work as a clinical outcome and worklessness as a public health issue. This paradigm shift has presented fresh challenges and changing priorities in OH, including research. OH research funding is scarce, and sponsors expect demonstrated value for money and impact from the resources provided. Understanding current national research priorities is essential to target funding and ensure research is relevant and impactful on an academic, policy and practical level.

## What was the objective?

to identify current research priorities for UK occupational physicians and occupational health researchers

## What was the outcome?

a ranking list of 10 research topics

## How long did the research prioritization take?

No information provided.

## Which methods were used to identify research priorities?

Delphi

## How were the priorities for research identified exactly?

Step 1: expert panel discussions alongside review of medical literature to identify current and emerging OH research topics, findings informed development of survey. Step 2: Delphi round 1: survey consisting of 10 primary research areas and more specific research topics belonging to these areas, participants were asked to rate importance of each research topic. Step 3: Delphi round 2: participants were asked to rank research areas and topics

## Which stakeholders took part?

Occupational physicians and occupational health researchers. Delphi round 1: 252 participants. Delphi round 2: 196 participants.

## How were stakeholders recruited?

In addition to the UK FOM, contacts were established with the UK Society of Occupational Medicine and key members of UK Academic OH institutions. These groups agreed to participate and disseminate the questionnaire among their respective memberships/department. Also, e-newsletters and professional networking media, conventional OH organizations/academic institutions membership lists and electronic mail and e-newsletters were used.

## Were stakeholders actively involved or did they just participate?

Stakeholders were mere participants of the research prioritization process; they were not actively involved in the process.