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Graduates' perceptions of prosthetic and orthotic education and clinical practice in Tanzania and Malawi

Lina Magnusson, Harold G Shangali and Gerd Ahlström

AIM

The aim was to describe how Tanzanian and Malawian graduates of the Diploma in Orthopaedic Technology offered at the Tanzania Training Centre for Orthopaedic Technologists perceived their education in relation to their profession.

RESULTS

Descriptive categories and conceptions



Aspects lacking in the learning context

Adequate teaching but can be improved.
Desire for teachers with higher degrees.
Inequality in treatment of students.



Enable people to walk is motivating

Helping people with disabilities is motivating.
Low-status profession.



Need for changes in the curriculum

Need for the addition of advanced prosthetic and orthotic technology.
Drop technical drawing, metalwork, woodwork.



Varied awareness of the profession before starting education

Low awareness of profession.
Desire to work with persons with disabilities.



Well-equipped teaching facilities

Good workshop facilities.
Books were available at library, but insufficient.
Satisfaction with hostel facilities.



Need for professional development

Desire for continued training.
Suggested ways of keeping updated.

Obstacles in working conditions

Varied support from senior staff and other professionals.
Lack of materials.
Different demands when working in underserved and less resourced settings.

All participants perceived possible improvements to the content and learning environment.

CONCLUSION

Prosthetic and orthotic services can be better provided by modifying the education program content.
Dedicating more time to the clinical management of different patient groups and applied biomechanics.
Reducing the program contents focus on technical aspects of prosthetic and orthotic practice.
Working in rural conditions has demands that graduates were not prepared for and the graduates desired continued training.

REFERENCE

Magnusson L, Shangali H and Ahlström G. Graduates' perceptions of prosthetic and orthotic education and clinical practice in Tanzania and Malawi. *African Journal of Disability*. 2016; 5(1), a142. Available from <http://ajod.org/index.php/ajod/article/view/142>

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