

Topic in the meeting School Education and Lifelong Education for Occupational Therapists

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The training for Occupational therapist (OT) has been started for the sick or wounded soldiers to be re-functioned and to work when they returned from the two World Wars in the first half of the 20th century. Then, occupational therapy has been rapidly spread all over the world, and in 1952 World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) given a kind of accreditation authority was established. Therefore, all accredited schools are expected to follow the educational standards they set.

In Japan occupational therapy education has started in 1963 by establishing as national schools. At present, there are 152 schools and 173 courses (as of 2004), the numbers of which ranks the second largest schools to the US. While US schools trend to move to be six year education including master's programs, Japan has 27 Universities with bachelor's degree of occupational therapy and only 13 schools with master's degree. As a helping profession, continuing education is inevitable in order to maintain and improve the quality of the profession. Japanese Association of Occupational Therapists (JAOT) has tried to construct a new system of a certified occupational therapist which consists of basic course and professional course as a continuing education in 2003. Now we proceed to have a professional occupational therapy specialist.