

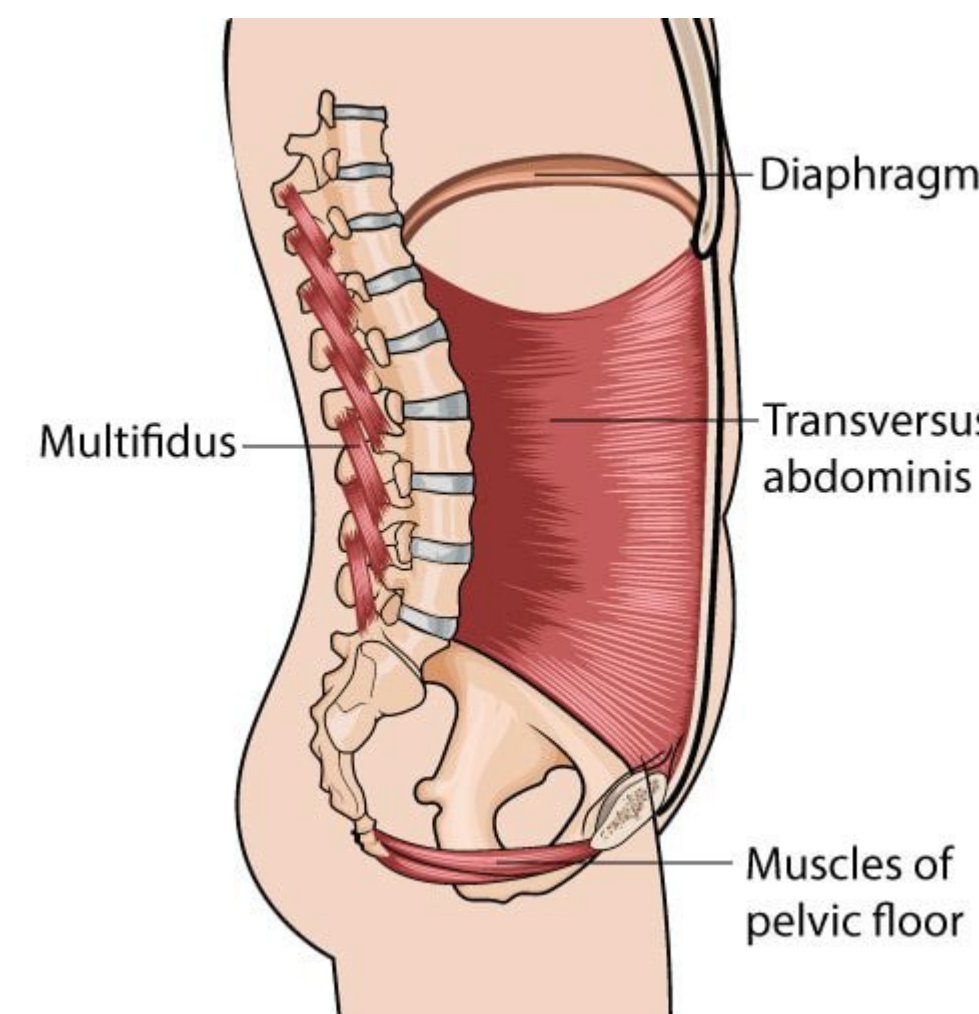
The role of occupational therapy in pelvic health: A state-of-the-art review

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BACKGROUND

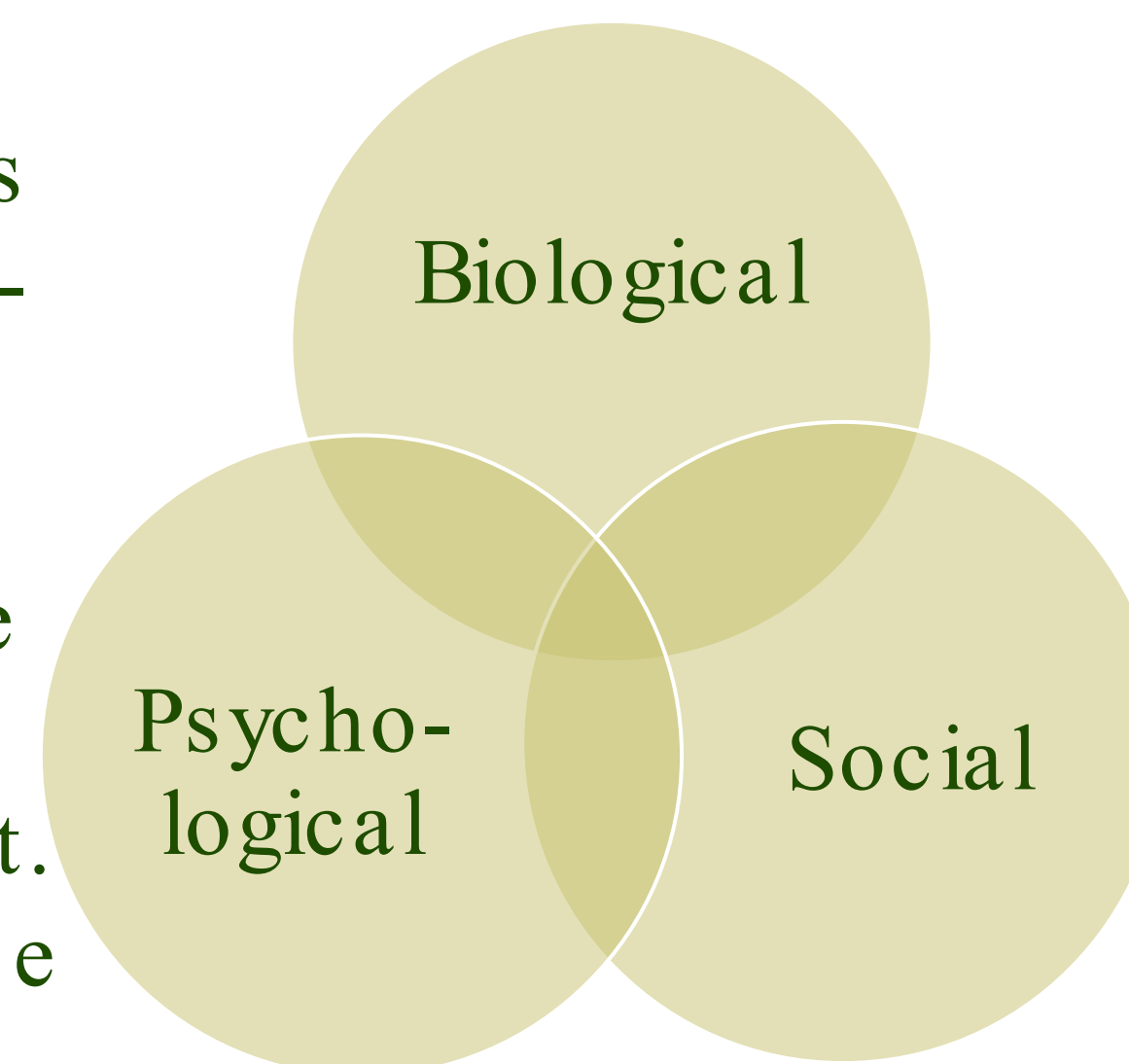
Pelvic floor dysfunction (PFD)

- The pelvic floor allows for appropriate elimination of urine and feces, assists in sexual functioning, and manages intra-abdominal pressure along with the diaphragm, abdominal muscles, and back muscles.
- Dysfunction can result in urinary or fecal incontinence, erectile dysfunction, pain with intercourse, constipation, or pelvic organ prolapse.



Occupational therapy and PFD

- PFD can be very disruptive to client's valued occupations, emotional well-being, and roles.
- Occupational therapy interventions can both reduce symptoms and the distress associated with PFD to increase occupational engagement.
- Pelvic health is an emerging practice in occupational therapy and has a small body of literature to support it.



OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Goal: To contribute original research to the field of occupational therapy by completing a state-of-the-art review that describes the current role of occupational therapy in pelvic health.

Objectives: related to familiarizing myself with state-of-the-art reviews, screening articles, and analyzing results.

Activities:

- Identify research question
- Conduct a broad scope of the literature
- Structured search of CINAHL and Medline databases
- Screen articles (n=234)
- Synthesize 24 articles into a narrative format

FINDINGS

Current practices in pelvic health occupational therapy

- *Client centered practice:* clients are empowered to be an active participant in the therapeutic process and interventions are personalized.
- *Evaluation and assessment:* holistic evaluation includes an occupational profile, biomechanical assessments, interoception assessments, mental health screening, and more.

Restorative Interventions	Compensatory Interventions
- Targeted PF exercises - Biofeedback PF training - Mobility/strength exercises - Nervous system regulation - Manual techniques (i.e myofascial release)	- Bladder retraining - Hydration/fiber recommendations - Adaptive equipment (i.e wedge pillow to decrease pain with intercourse)

Efficacy of pelvic health occupational therapy

- Decreased PFD symptoms
- Return to valued occupations and roles
- Improved confidence, body literacy, and emotional regulation
- Clients “feel like they can breathe again”

Future opportunities for pelvic health occupational therapy

- Pregnancy and acute postpartum care
- Pediatrics
- Chronic pain
- Older adults

EVALUATION

- Journaling about capstone process
- Regular check-ins with mentor about progress
- Midterm evaluation
- Final evaluation



CONCLUSION

The unique value of occupational therapy

- PFD is highly complex and disruptive to emotional well-being, identity, and occupational engagement.
- Because of PFD's influence on quality of life, occupational therapists are well-suited to help individuals treat, manage, and prevent PFD.
- Pelvic health occupational therapy can improve both PFD symptoms and how PFD symptoms influence life satisfaction.

Call to action

- More research needs to be done to demonstrate occupational therapy's true value and scope in pelvic health.
- Occupational therapists must advocate for their roles on pelvic health teams, including in specialty populations such as chronic pain or acute postpartum care.

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REFERENCES



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