INside the OUTcomes: A Rehabilitation Research Podcast

Episode 28: Student Contributions to the Rehabilitation Measures Database   
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SHARON PARMET, HOST:  
On this episode of INside the OUTcomes, we explore how occupational therapy graduate students at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Applied Health Sciences contribute to the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab [Rehabilitation Measures Database](https://www.sralab.org/rehabilitation-measures). The database, also known as the RMD, is an online resource of more than 580 rehabilitation measures reviewed and summarized by educators and allied health students, just like those at UIC. My guests are [Sabrin Rizk](https://ahs.uic.edu/profiles/rizk-sabrin/), Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy in the [UIC College of Applied Health Sciences](https://ahs.uic.edu/). Dr. Rizk teaches the measurement science module to occupational therapy graduate students like my other guests, Asianna Griffin. Welcome to the podcast, Dr. Rizk and Asianna.

DR. RIZK:  
Thank you for having us.

ASIANNA:  
Thank you for having us.

SHARON:

So my first question is for Dr. Rizk. First, let's maybe define what the Rehabilitation Measures Database is and what a measure summary is.

DR. RIZK:  
Sure, so the Rehab Measures Database was really created to help rehab clinicians implement outcome-based measures in their daily practice. So this is a freely available resource. It's web-based and it has over 580 different measures that are searchable in terms of the outcomes that different clinicians are wanting to measure. And specifically with helping clinicians be able to identify an appropriate instrument for screening, for monitoring patient's progress, and then assessing different outcomes within rehabilitation.

It gives really nice and concise descriptions of the instruments that are appropriate for use in care. And it often helps clinicians in implementing and modifying their plans of care so that they can ultimately get the patient outcomes that they're striving for.

So UIC is part of a collaborative with the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab. And I do teach a course in the OT curriculum. It is the measurement science module in our evidence-based research series. So part of this course is really helping students to become good consumers of research, to understand how to use assessment data and to understand instrumentation and the way that instrumentation guides their ability to evaluate and design interventions that are responsive to clients' needs.

So as part of this course, students get into a group and they contribute to this publicly available database, the RMD. We hope that it helps them develop skills, like professional identity and leadership, which is one of our curricular themes at UIC OT. So by developing a summary of an instrument, they take a deep dive into an instrument. And what they do is they conduct a lit review. They talk about things like the populations of interest in which the instrument is used. They talk about different sorts of populations for which the data were normed on, different conditions that the assessments are used to evaluate and essentially design interventions for. And then what they do is they take that and Shirley Ryan   
  
has a really wonderful template that they provide us with that keeps everything consistent on that RMD database, on that RMD website. And the students... what they do is they take that template and after all of the research they conduct on populations, the norms, the construct validity, reliability, all of those different psychometric properties, they take that and they update eventually what will be posted on the RMD website.

What's really nice for the students is that it's a really valuable contribution to a to an external facing resource to clinicians. And if their summary gets published online, this is also a nice opportunity for students to have their names on something that's published since they become the instrument reviewers and taking on this work, so it's a nice publication opportunity for them. And they're also offered a chance to develop a tear sheet, which is really a concise summary of the instrument for publications in Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehab or other peer-reviewed journals. So it really not, it doesn't only enhance their professional portfolio, but it also contributes to the broader field of rehab and making that information accessible to clinicians and to researchers.

SHARON:  
That is a really concise summary of how we work with occupational therapy and physical therapy and other allied health courses throughout the nation on updating these summaries. So, Asianna, you are a student in Dr. Rizk's class. Can you tell us a little bit about your particular assignment, what summary you're working with, and how you're working to update?

ASIANNA:  
Yes, so in her class, I actually worked with the Peabody. The Peabody, and we actually did the Peabody Development Motor Skills 3.

SHARON:  
Before you go on, can you describe what is that measure?

ASIANNA:  
So basically the Peabody Developmental Motor Skills, it is a assessment that looks at like gross and fine motor skills, typically of a child. And we did the latest edition, so it was pretty new. And overall, I would say it was a great experience to work on that. And like Dr. Rizk said, we looked at like psychometric properties which we had learned in our previous course. So it was nice to actually be able to apply what we have been learning. That was really great.

And I think overall, like we worked in a group and we looked at like just like the population of interest and we broke it down into like a lit review. And it was nice to be able to summarize things for Shirley Ryan, the RMD database. That was really nice to do. And I think it was nice to have, like Dr. Rizk said, like a publication opportunity as a student, because that's a very, we're lucky to have that. That's a very rare thing to do as a student. So it was nice to do that. And to see the RMD database is something that we use regularly to be able to look at different assessments and things. And so to be able to contribute to that as a student, I think that was really great for me and my peers as like a future practicing OT. I really enjoyed that part of it. And I think it really helps me for like my professional identity and knowing that like this is something that I can continue to work on, continue to do and continue to like contribute to like the field of occupational therapy. That was really important for me.

SHARON:  
So this introduction to the RMD for you, you're gonna use this resource for the rest of your career, right?

ASIANNA:  
Yes, yes, definitely.

SHARON:  
Okay, that's our goal! I work on a research project for the Rehabilitation Measures Database as well. And the whole goal of partnering with educational programs is to introduce students to the Rehabilitation Measures Database and get them using it as they are entering into their fields of practice to deliver patient-centered care. So that's wonderful. Do you have any specific places you might want to work or areas you want to go into after you get your OT?

ASIANNA:  
After I get my degree, I definitely would like to go into pediatric occupational therapy. I am still undecided between school-based and outpatient pediatric.

SHARON:  
Well, thank you so much. Dr. Risk, was there anything else you wanted to talk about about the partnership with Shirley Ryan AbilityLab?

**DR. RIZK:**You know, one thing that I really like about this partnership is it really brings a lot of these concepts to life, right? So when we don't have context in which this information's gonna be used, sometimes it doesn't feel as useful, right? But when we are given this opportunity and this partnership where we are able to actively contribute as an OT program, to a really well-known resource, an important resource to clinicians and researchers, it makes the content feel, you just feel more connected to it, right? It's not as misplaced in the curriculum or you don't feel like, what am I ever gonna do with this, right? Because there are direct outputs that the students are able to see pretty quickly, right? So they're able to see why it's important we, you know, look at psychometric properties. What is the scope of different assessment tools? How do you score it? What do those scores mean? Who were these, you know, assessments designed for? What are the underlying constructs in which these measures are based upon? So I really like how Shirley Ryan has helped us bring this content to life and that it really is an important part of what OTs do in terms of evaluation and intervention design and implementation and measuring outcomes.

SHARON:  
Asianna, do you have anything else you want to add?

ASIANNA:

I think it's a great opportunity to work with Shirley Ryan in this. And even now, in Susan's class, we're working on the infographic with Shirley Ryan. And I think it's just a great opportunity to see what we are learning and applying what we have been learning and see it actually come to fruition. It's really nice.

SHARON:  
I worked with Susan's class a couple of weeks ago. I went in to work with her students who are doing the infographics now. The infographics are a one-page plain language, kind of description of measures. So it goes into what is this measure? What does it measure? What am I gonna have to do? And what does the score mean? And they're meant to be shared with patients and their care partners so that they can better understand what's going on when their therapist is evaluating them using one of these standardized instruments. So I went in and we reviewed 10 infographics. They were excellent. You could see that there are some challenges with turning this information into just plain language. It's not easy, but they did really, really well. So Asianna, are you gonna do your infographic next year?

ASIANNA:  
Yeah, I was actually in Susan's class with you when you came in. Yes, so yeah.

SHARON:  
There are like 40 people in the class! Which one did you do?

**ASIANNA:**The Peabody one.

**SHARON:**Okay. Well, I thought that sounded familiar when you said that your measure was the Peabody. I was like, I just looked at that the other day. Okay, so full circle. We're all in this together.

**ASIANNA:**Yes.

**SHARON:**Well, this has been a wonderful episode. I'm really glad that we all had a chance to connect. And I will be connecting more with UIC in the future. I really look forward to it every year coming in and critiquing the infographics. Did we miss anything that we want to go back to? I think it was pretty, we covered everything.

**DR. RIZK:**Maybe just a special thanks to Kevin Fearn. He's really instrumental in answering our questions and really listening to the needs of the assignment when we go through this process of selecting measures again for the next cohort. He's really a big piece of that. So a really like a special thank you to him.

**SHARON:**Kevin works with the Rehabilitation Measures Database as a project coordinator, and his role is to work with students of programs that we connect with around the country. And he is the one that ferries the student updates into the actual RMD, and he very meticulously checks everything. He's very detail-oriented, and we're so glad that we have him on our team, and I will make sure to tell him about this shout-out.

**DR. RIZK:**Yeah, because he's, he's wonderful to work with. And he does a lot of heavy lifting throughout the process. So before, after, after we've submitted things like that. So he's a he's an important part of our class as well.

**SHARON:**He definitely is. So thank you both so much for being on this episode.

**DR. RIZK:**Thank you so much.

**ASIANNA:**Thank you.

**SHARON:**This has been INside the OUTcomes: A Rehabilitation Research Podcast. This podcast is supported by grants from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. I'm your host, Sharon Parmet, signing off.