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TITLE Leadership in Occupational Therapy: Self Perceptions of Occupational Therapy Managers

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study is to increase knowledge about leadership in the field of occupational therapy management.

METHODOLOGY One hundred and fifty occupational therapy managers in the United States who were members of the American Occupational Therapy Association's Administration and Management Special Interest Section were randomly selected and surveyed; 53 responded (35% response rate). They completed the Leadership Practices Inventory and provided demographic information. The typical respondent was female (77%), with a baccalaureate (58%) or masters (38%) degree in occupational therapy, employed in either hospital (non-mental health) practice settings (38%) or long term care (18%), with an average of 12.4 years of work experience as occupational therapists and a mean of 19.7 years of occupational therapy management experience.

KEY FINDINGS The most frequent leadership practice reported was Enabling, followed by Modeling and Encouraging, followed by Challenging and Inspiring. Generally LPI scores were not significantly correlated with demographic factors like gender, education, practice setting or years of experience. In conclusion, the author states:

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I would like to challenge all managers and OT practitioners to seriously reflect on their leadership characteristics and abilities. I ask that they refer to the LPI leadership areas set forth by Kouzes and Posner (1995) and look to challenge the process, enable others to act, encourage the heart, inspire a shared vision, and model the way. It is my belief that through a balance between all five of these principles, occupational therapists can answer the call of the profession and become a profession that will have the power to influence and lead (pp. 63-4).