

Efficacy and Perceptions of Pediatric Telehealth Occupational Therapy

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Background

Telehealth use has increased in recent years, indicating a need for more research (Algo & Gilboa, 2022; Breeden et al., 2023; Fairweather et al., 2021; Kaur et al., 2022; Sofaer & Firminger, 2005; Wittmeier et al., 2022).

Telehealth is the provision of healthcare services via the internet or phone and may include synchronous or asynchronous communication (Wittmeier et al., 2022). The current study addressed the need for more research by examining perceptions of pediatric telehealth occupational therapy among clients and providers, and its impact on occupational performance and participation.

Research Questions

- How do provider perceptions of telehealth occupational therapy services vary as compared to traditional occupational therapy for the pediatric population?
- How do client perceptions of telehealth occupational therapy services vary as compared to traditional occupational therapy for the pediatric population?
- How do telehealth occupational therapy services affect occupational performance and participation in the pediatric population?

Methods

The mixed methods scoping review was designed according to the protocol of Arksey & O'Malley (2005) and PRISMA ScR reporting guidelines. Articles in the study were published between 2015-2026, peer reviewed, and examined pediatric telehealth in occupational therapy. Each article was assessed using McMaster's Critical Appraisal Forms, and the first author thematically analyzed the results of the articles.

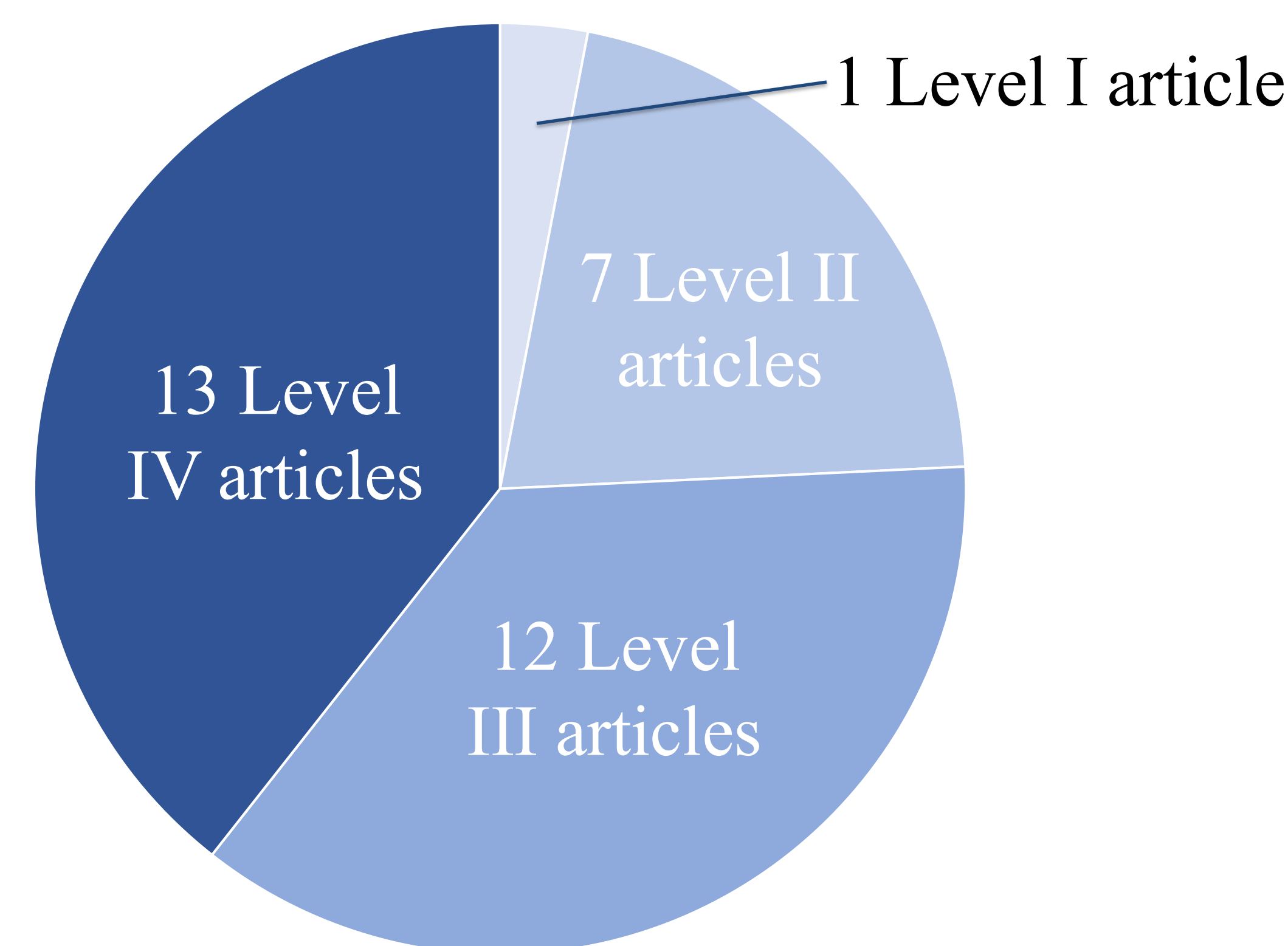
Client-Focused Themes

- Factors Impacting Telehealth Success
- Importance of Caregiver Coaching
- Acceptability and Satisfaction with Telehealth
- Contextual Relevance
- Telehealth and Occupational Performance

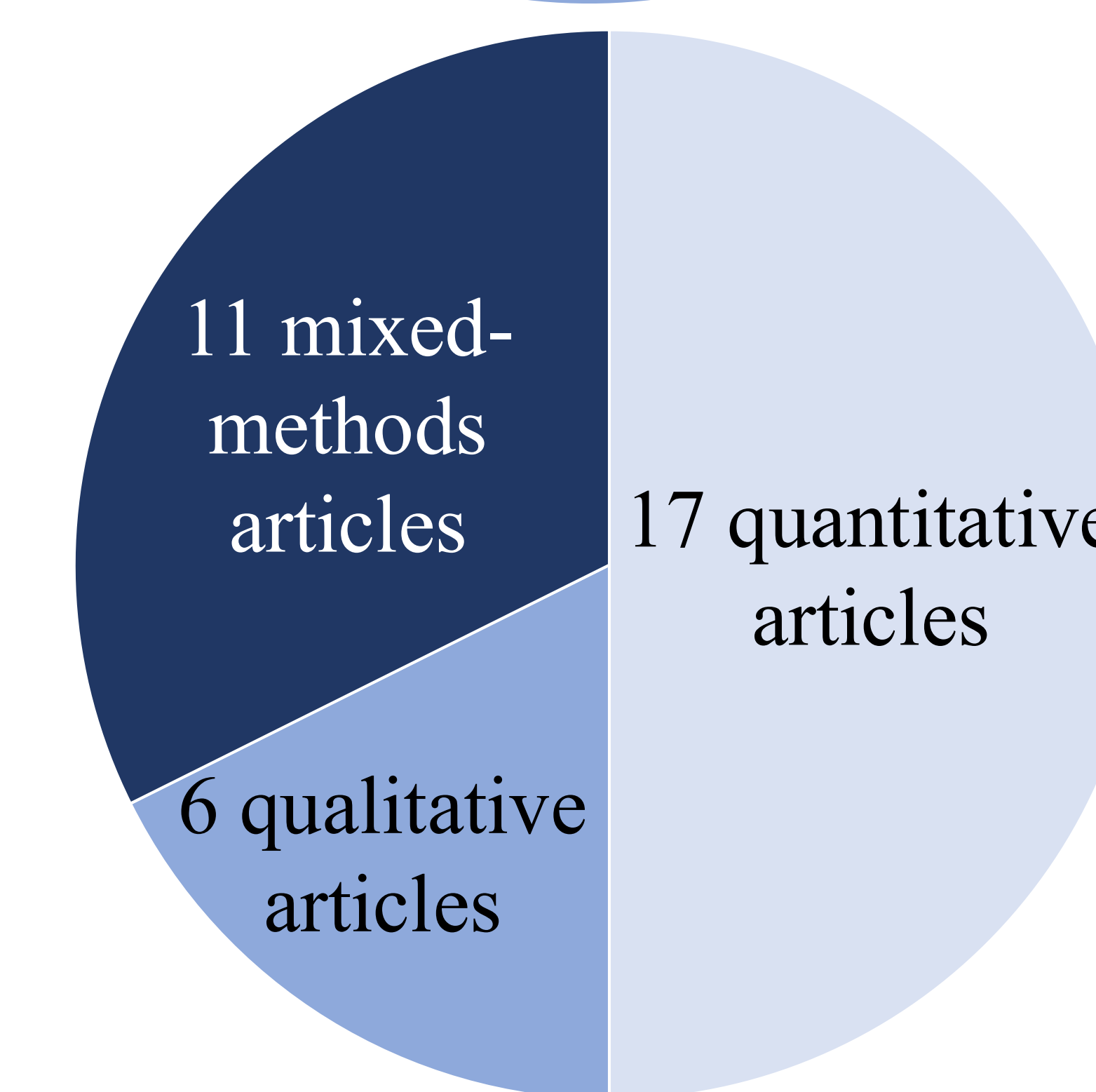
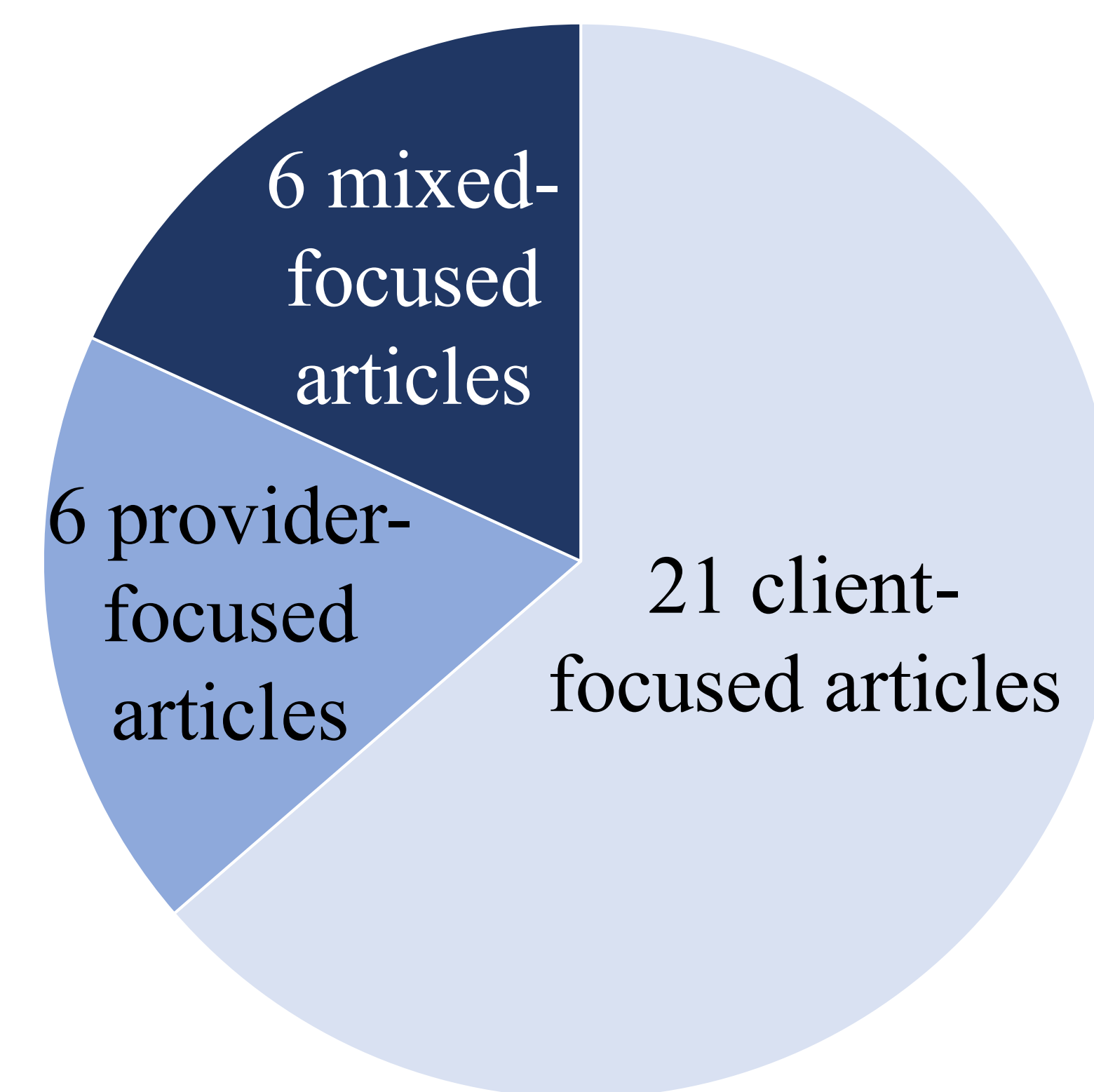
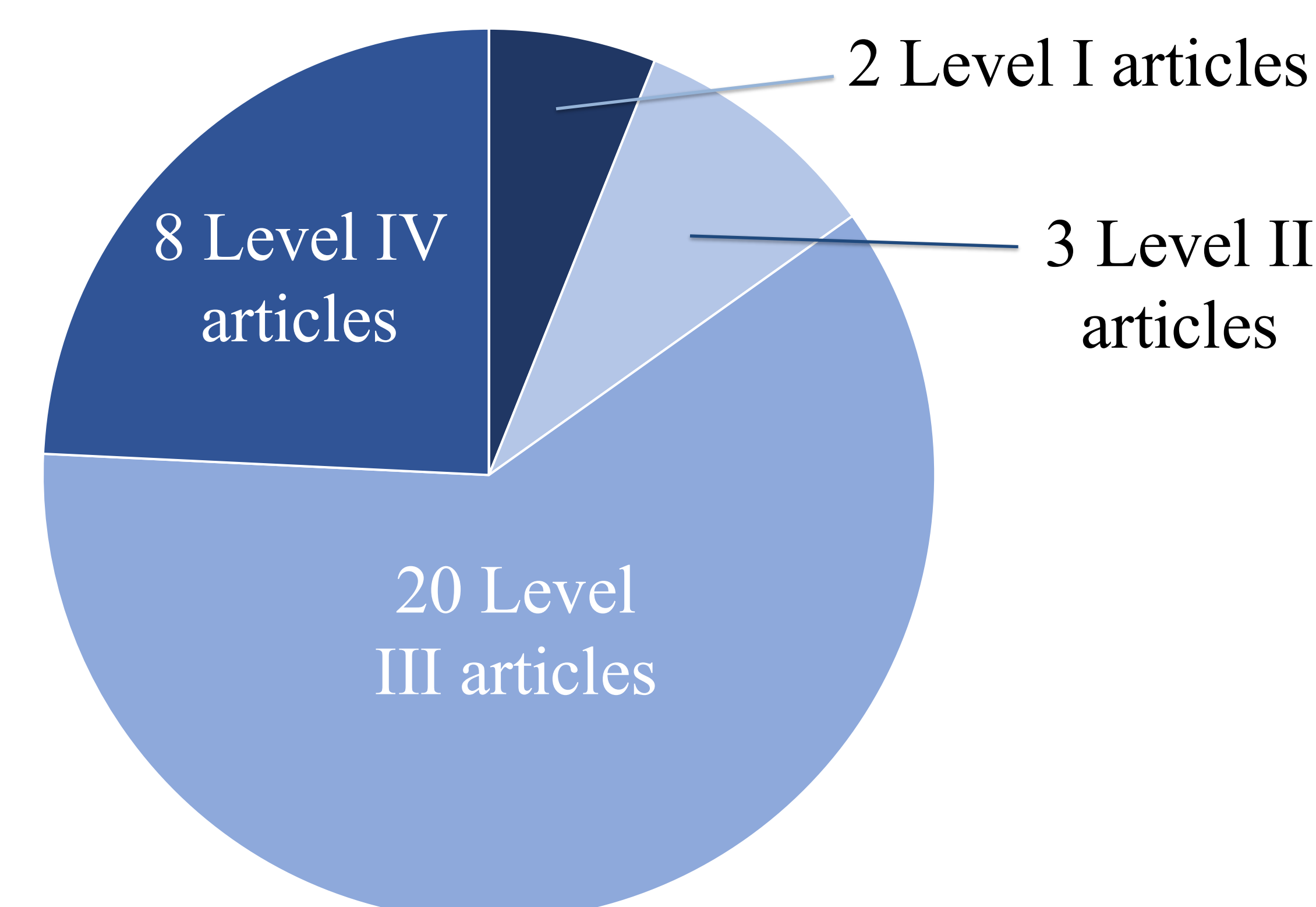
Provider-Focused Themes

- Strengths of Telehealth
- Factors Impacting Fit of Telehealth
- Provider Readiness and Training Needs
- Barriers to Telehealth Efficacy
- Access, Feasibility, and Value of Telehealth

AOTA Level of Evidence



Yardley & Dornan Level of Evidence



OTPF-4 Occupation Category Examined	
OTPF-4 Occupation Category	Articles
Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)	Choi et al., 2023; Deghani et al., 2023; Ferre et al., 2016; Jamali et al., 2021; Little et al., 2018; Little et al., 2023; Mudholkar et al., 2025; Pijarnvanit & Sriphetcharawut, 2024; Reifenberg et al., 2017; Smith, Aytur, and Humphreys, 2022; St. John and Ausderau, 2024; Tkach and Dunn, 2025; Wallisch et al., 2019; Guney Yilmaz and Onal, 2021; Angell et al., 2023; Mudholkar et al., 2025; Hladik et al., 2023; Onal et al., 2021
Health Management	Jewell et al., 2025; Smith, Aytur, and Humphreys, 2022
Rest and Sleep	Choi et al., 2023; Jamali et al., 2021; Little et al., 2018; Tkach and Dunn, 2025
Education	Ferre et al., 2016; Pijarnvanit & Sriphetcharawut, 2024; Sinvani & Gilboa, 2023; Mudholkar et al., 2025; Abbott-Gaffney and Jacobs, 2020; Ryan-Bloomer and Delahunt, 2022; Onal et al., 2021; Rortvedt and Jacobs, 2019
Play	Choi et al., 2023; Ferre et al., 2016; Jamali et al., 2021; Little et al., 2018; Phillips et al., 2023; Smith, Aytur, and Humphreys, 2022
Leisure	Little et al., 2018; Pijarnvanit & Sriphetcharawut, 2024; Smith, Aytur, and Humphreys, 2022
Social Participation	Choi et al., 2023; Deghani et al., 2023; Jamali et al., 2021; Little et al., 2018; Little et al., 2018; Phillips et al., 2023; Reifenberg et al., 2017; Smith, Aytur, and Humphreys, 2022; St. John and Ausderau, 2024; Tkach and Dunn, 2025; Guney Yilmaz and Onal, 2021; Ryan-Bloomer and Delahunt, 2022; Onal et al., 2021

Discussion & Conclusion

The results indicate that pediatric telehealth occupational therapy is effective and feasible. Clients report higher satisfaction with telehealth than providers (Ben Zagmi-Averbuch, 2025). While preliminary evidence supports telehealth, it is not appropriate or effective for every client or goal (Angell et al., 2023; Baker et al., 2025; Hladik et al., 2023; Mills et al., 2023; Rortvedt & Jacobs, 2019). Providers must consider client characteristics, context, goals, and preferences when considering telehealth (Mills et al., 2019; Rortvedt & Jacobs, 2019).

Telehealth may overcome barriers and improve service access, but may exacerbate inequities if technological literacy, digital inclusion, and socioeconomic factors are not considered (Ben Zagmi-Averbuch, 2025; Mills et al., 2023; Phillips et al., 2022; Onal et al., 2021; Sinvani et al., 2023). Telehealth can be a good option in addition to traditional occupational therapy. The literature on pediatric telehealth occupational therapy is consistent but limited. More research of higher rigor is recommended, including randomized controlled trials with larger and more diverse sample sizes.

References

Scan QR code for additional tables and reference list.



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