EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to ascertain which extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction areas are most predictive of rehabilitation professionals' career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job. This article discusses the results of a survey conducted on practicing occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech-language pathologists regarding factors that contribute to career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job. Five hundred surveys were mailed to each profession; 463 were returned, of which 328 were able to be analyzed.

Results from regression analysis showed that intrinsic factors such as professional growth and having a work environment in line with personal values are more significant in predicting career satisfaction than are extrinsic factors such as pay and continuing education. These same intrinsic factors are also significant in predicting the rehabilitation professional's desire to stay on the job. These findings are significant to healthcare managers desiring to recruit and retain qualified occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech-language pathologists. In addition to extrinsic benefits such as pay, healthcare managers need to focus on provision of intrinsic factors such as opportunities for professional growth, recognition of accomplishments, and opportunities for departmental input to motivate rehabilitation professionals.
"If you want to motivate the worker, don't put in another water fountain; provide a bigger share of the job itself" (Herzberg 1959). This quote by Fredrick Herzberg succinctly sums up his philosophy on creating and maintaining employee motivation and satisfaction. Since enactment of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (PL-105-33), occupational therapists (OT), physical therapists (PT), and speech-language pathologists (SLP) have been faced with changes in the healthcare system that have affected their ability to deliver rehabilitative services. The amount of time these rehabilitation professionals can spend with clients, length of stay for which clients are able to qualify, and type of settings in which rehabilitation professionals typically work are among these changes. Often, insurance companies, instead of the physician or rehabilitation professional, are making the decision on how long a patient may receive treatment and what type of treatment the patient will receive. These changes may in turn create dissatisfaction for rehabilitation professionals.

In 1995, as part of a master's degree thesis, the author completed a survey of 500 OTs, 500 PTs, and 500 SLPs to determine which extrinsic, intrinsic-context, and intrinsic-content factors were correlated with career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job (Barnes 1996). The choice of thesis topic was in response to concern among hospital administrators about how to best recruit and retain OTs, PTs, and SLPs. The sample was randomly chosen from membership lists from the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), and American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA). The research design consisted of establishing frequencies of response for important factors as well as using chi-square analysis to determine the significance of each factor to career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job.

Extrinsic factors were defined as those external benefits provided to the professional by the facility or organization. Such factors include flexible schedule, competitive pay, and continuing education. Intrinsic factors were divided into intrinsic-context and intrinsic-content. Intrinsic-context factors are less tangible but inherent to the job; they are controlled by outside forces but affect the professional's internal satisfaction. Factors included are adequate staffing, realistic workload, stable environment, and balance between work and home. Intrinsic-content factors are those controlled primarily by the professional and affect the professional's sense of self-efficacy and competence. These factors include having diversity in practice, providing direct patient care, having meaningful work, and providing quality care.

Results showed that the only extrinsic factors that were significant were productivity expectations, which negatively correlated with career satisfaction, and flexible scheduling, which positively correlated with desire to stay on the job. Intrinsic-context factors such as a stable work environment, opportunity for professional growth, input into departmental decisions, and practicing in an environment that was in line with the professional's values.
were significantly positively correlated with career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job. Intrinsic-content factors such as opportunity for direct patient care, feeling competent, accomplishing career objectives, and meaningful work were significantly correlated with career satisfaction. Intrinsic-content factors such as fair policies, accomplishing career objectives, and closeness with coworkers were significantly correlated with desire to stay on the job.

A second survey was conducted in 2000 to determine if differences had occurred in career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job since 1995. It was determined that a second survey might reveal changes because of increased managed care in rehabilitation services. Therefore, the purpose of this second study was to ascertain which extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction areas were most predictive of rehabilitation professionals' career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job. A comparison could then be made with the earlier survey to see if changes have occurred since the increase in managed care. Rehabilitation professionals included in this study were OTs, PTs, and SLPs. This information is felt to be important for healthcare managers and human resources personnel desiring to attract and retain qualified rehabilitation professionals.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Rehabilitation Professionals
Studies of OTs show that general working conditions and task autonomy are significant predictors of commitment in ambulatory care settings (Painter and Akroyd 1998; Painter et al. 1995). In addition, communication and cooperation among team members, managerial feedback, the patient's influence on care, and the relatives' influence on care are significant for job satisfaction (Eklund and Hallberg 2000). Another study shows that issues such as lack of respect, excessive paperwork, limited advancement, stress, and overload are factors in attrition of female OTs (Baley 1990). Lastly, a study examining retention of OT staff in rehabilitation settings shows that issues change with years of experience, with less experienced therapists leaving because of productivity expectations and increased paperwork and more experienced therapists leaving because of interpersonal conflict and disillusionment with departmental management (Freda 1992).

PTs identify feeling satisfied with their profession when they experience freedom on the job and development of skills. Pay and benefits and opportunities for career development are the major determinants of retention (Okerlund, Jackson, and Parsons 1994; Noh and Beggs 1993).

Nursing
Studies have revealed issues of task requirements, stress, and organizational policies as causing discontentment with nursing staff. Positive relationships, autonomy, participative decision-making management styles, salary, and job status positively affect job satisfaction (Finn 2001). Another study reveals five coherent factors defining job satisfaction: interpersonal contact, pace of work, meaning of work, autonomy, and control of work (Murray 1988). Intrinsic factors are identified as
sources of job satisfaction, and in an ethnographic study the opportunity to "make a difference in people's lives," the challenges of being the "patient's advocate," financial stability, and flexibility of schedules and work settings were identified as the most appealing aspects of the job (Chiara 1993; Koebel, Fuller, and Misener 1991).

Studies also indicate that job satisfaction factors differ within levels of nursing, with higher-level nurses valuing intrinsic factors more and lower-level nurses valuing extrinsic factors more (Bell 1993; Malkin 1993; Robertson et al. 1999).

**Theoretical Framework**


Herzberg (1959) identifies two factors that are operative in motivation: satisfiers and dissatisfiers. Factors such as company policy, supervisors, and work conditions, if perceived as negative or lacking, are dissatisfiers. If they are present and perceived as good, they are satisfiers but not motivators. Motivators include such things as opportunity for advancement and promotion, greater responsibility, opportunity for growth, and interesting work.

Bandura (1986) explains self-efficacy as people's judgment of their own capabilities and standards. He states that people take pride in their accomplishments when they ascribe their successes to their own ability and effort. Bush, Powell, and Herzberg (1993) looked at self-efficacy related to motivation in OTs and determined that OTs are leaving the profession because of unmet career expectations.

The theoretical approach used in designing the present study was that of self-efficacy and Herzberg's two-factor theory. The study determined which factors are dissatisfying, satisfying, and motivating. In addition, many of the intrinsic-context and intrinsic-content factors surveyed focused on issues of self-efficacy. These theories assisted in examining the results and determining a focus for the future.

Reviews of rehabilitation and nursing literature reveal that multiple factors affect motivation, career satisfaction, and desire to stay on the job. A vast amount of research has been done on these factors with regard to nursing, but less so with regard to rehabilitation professionals. Although it could be argued that many of the factors are similar with regard to recruitment and retention, practice areas and foci are different enough to warrant further examination specific to rehabilitation professionals. In addition, the continually changing healthcare environment may potentially have an effect on career satisfaction and retention issues for all health professionals. Therefore, understanding which factors are most
predictive of career satisfaction and desire to stay would be helpful for managers and human relations personnel for recruitment and retention issues.

**METHODS**

**Subjects**

Participants were selected from random samples of currently practicing OTs, PTs, and SLPs—chosen from the membership files of AOTA, APTA, and ASHA—who work with clients at least 60 percent of their time. Rehabilitation professionals who work primarily as administrators, researchers, and academicians were excluded. This sample was chosen similarly to the sample analyzed in the 1995 survey. Because the participants were randomly selected, some of the participants may have answered both surveys, but for the most part the samples did not contain the same participants. However, because the study used the same membership organizations and because of the random sampling, the author is confident that strong comparisons can be made between surveys. Bias may be a factor, as not all OTs, PTs, and SLPs belong to their respective membership organizations. Therefore, results are not generalizable to those who do not belong to the membership organizations.

**Procedures**

There were 1,500 surveys mailed (500 to each profession), with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return to the investigator. Participants were asked to complete the survey within a two-week period; 463 surveys were returned, and 328 were usable. The initial survey in 1995 had a response rate of 830, with 620 in usable form. Surveys that were not usable were mostly from professionals who had been in a clinical position less than 60 percent of the time. Other surveys were deemed unusable because of incompleteness.

**Survey Instrument**

The survey instrument was developed from the review of literature prior to the first survey conducted in 1995 (Barnes 1996). The survey was developed by the author and her thesis committee. Participants identified their level of career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job on a five-point scale. They were then asked to identify the availability and importance of intrinsic and extrinsic job factors. Extrinsic factors are those that are traditionally provided by the employer, including the following:

- Family leave
- Flexible schedule
- Cafeteria-type benefits
- Employer-provided child care
- Competitive pay
- Continuing education
- Tuition reimbursement
- Productivity expectations
- Use of extender personnel
- Clinical ladder

Intrinsic-context factors are less tangible but inherent to the job; they are
controlled by outside forces but affect a participant's internal motivation:

- Adequate staffing
- Realistic workload
- Facility reputation
- Adequate support staff
- Career advancement
- Stable environment
- Professional growth opportunities
- Support by physicians
- Support by other healthcare professionals
- Support by administration
- Communication with management
- Input into departmental decisions
- Recognition for accomplishments
- Feeling valued as an employee
- Environment in line with values
- Input into professional growth
- Balance between work and home
- Adequate guidance
- Quality supervision

Intrinsic-content factors are those controlled mostly by the professional and affecting the professional's sense of self-efficacy:

- Program development
- Opportunity to conduct clinical research
- Interdisciplinary team participation
- Diversity of practice
- Role conflict with other professionals
- Direct patient care
- Fair policies
- Helping people become well

- Feeling close with coworkers
- Helping people prevent disabilities
- Helping people overcome disabilities
- Feelings of competency
- Proper training
- Meaningful work
- Accomplishing career objectives
- Providing quality care

Importance was rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale. Open-ended questions were asked to identify any additional factors that affected career satisfaction or desire to stay on the job. The final section of the survey was a series of questions identifying demographic factors.

**Data Analysis**

Data were examined using frequency of response to identify the population of respondents. Linear regression analyses were performed to assist in identifying factors significant in predicting career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job. Hair et al. (1998) define linear regression analysis as "a statistical technique that can be used to analyze the relationship between a single dependent (criterion) variable and several independent (predictor) variables." The most direct interpretation of the regression variate is a determination of the relative importance of each independent variable in the prediction of the dependent measure. Linear regression was chosen for this analysis, instead of the chi-square analysis performed on the initial survey, because of the improved ability of logistic regression analysis to predict job satisfaction and
desire to stay on the job, as opposed to reporting significant correlations through chi-square analysis.

**RESULTS**

**Description of Sample**

Similar to the survey conducted in 1995, the percentage of each profession (OTs, PTs, and SLPs) was fairly even (31 percent, 43 percent, and 26 percent, respectively). The mean age was 38, with 12 years of experience. The average hours worked were 36, with 84 percent of the time spent in clinical work. The mean years spent with the current employer were 5.8, with 5.7 of them in the same position. Eighty-one percent of the rehabilitation professionals stated that they were very or somewhat satisfied with their careers, compared to 89 percent on the first survey. Seventy-six percent stated that they definitely or probably would stay at their current job, compared to 81 percent on the initial survey.

**Regression Analysis**

Logistic regression analyses were run with career satisfaction as the dependent variable, considering the rehabilitation professionals in total and then separately. Results in Table 1 show that having an environment in line with the professional's values and having opportunities for professional growth were significant predictors of career satisfaction for the professions in total and for OTs and PTs separately. Closeeness with coworkers and providing quality care were also significant with regard to predicting career satisfaction for OTs. Helping people become well was significant for PTs, and team participation was negatively correlated with career satisfaction.

Accomplishing career objectives, having a realistic workload, having an adequate support staff, achieving a balance between work and home, having a flexible schedule, and helping people overcome disabilities were predictive of career satisfaction for SLPs. The adjusted $R^2$ showed a predictive value of these factors of 39 percent for rehabilitation professionals in total, 77 percent for OTs, 32 percent for PTs, and 62 percent for SLPs.

Results in Table 2 show that professional growth and having an environment in line with the professional's values continued to be predictive of desire to stay on the job for the professions in total and for OTs and PTs. Having adequate support staff was also predictive of desire to stay on the job for OTs, and accomplishing career objectives was predictive for PTs and SLPs. In addition, having a flexible schedule, proper training, absence of role conflict, and having a realistic workload were predictive of the desire to stay on the job for SLPs. The adjusted $R^2$ showed a predictive value of these factors of 27 percent for rehabilitation professionals in total, 65 percent for OTs, 21 percent for PTs, and 49 percent for SLPs.

**DISCUSSION**

Recruitment and retention of qualified rehabilitation professionals is an important issue for healthcare managers. Knowledge of those factors that provide career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job can assist the healthcare
### TABLE 1
Regression Analysis of Career Satisfaction, by Profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Occupational Therapists</th>
<th>Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Physical Therapists</th>
<th>Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Speech-Language Pathologists</th>
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<td>Realistic workload</td>
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<td>Productivity expectations</td>
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<td>Closeness with coworkers</td>
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<td>Helping people become well</td>
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<td>Adequate support staff</td>
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<td>Recognition for achievements</td>
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<td>Team participation</td>
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<td>Helping people overcome disabilities</td>
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*p < .05; **p < .01.
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<th>Total</th>
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<th>Regression Coefficient</th>
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<td>Adequate support staff</td>
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<td>Role conflict</td>
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<td>.21</td>
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</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01.
manager in obtaining and maintaining a competent rehabilitation staff. According to the survey conducted in 2000, career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job remain high for rehabilitation professionals, although decreased from the initial survey conducted in 1995. Intrinsic factors, such as having an environment in line with the professional's values, continue to dominate as predictive factors for both career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job for all three rehabilitation professions. Extrinsic factors, such as competitive pay, were weaker in significance for predicting career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job.

When examined separately, issues between OTs, PTs, and SLPs had some differences. OTs and PTs agreed more regarding factors important for career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job than OTs and SLPs or PTs and SLPs. Much of the literature regarding health professionals' career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job has focused on availability of extrinsic factors such as pay, continuing education, and clinical ladders, with autonomy being one of the few intrinsic factors mentioned. It appears, however, from this and the previous analysis, that healthcare managers should focus efforts on intrinsic factors such as professional growth, provision of an environment in line with the professional's values, and recognition for achievements as much as or more than on extrinsic factors such as pay.

CONCLUSION
A survey of currently practicing OTs, PTs, and SLPs revealed factors that are predictive of career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job. Results revealed that intrinsic factors, rather than extrinsic factors such as pay, tend to be predictive of career satisfaction and desire to stay on the job. Strengths of this study are the large sample size as well as a fairly equal distribution of professions. Another strength is that the findings corroborate earlier surveys. A limitation of the study is that the sample was not controlled by age or level of experience. Another limitation is that the sample was drawn from rehabilitation professionals who are members of their respective membership organizations. Perhaps those professionals who are not members would have different responses than the sample chosen. It was also impossible to compare the same participants from survey to survey, limiting conclusions that could be drawn between the two surveys. There was also no sorting or sampling based on region, which would provide a more representative sample of the rehabilitation professions.

The implication for managers is that if facilities desire to attract and retain rehabilitation professionals, they will need to find ways to provide these intrinsic factors as well as those traditional benefits. Providing the rehabilitation professional with not only the traditional benefits they need but also the intrinsic benefits they desire will improve career satisfaction, reduce attrition, and retain qualified personnel needed to provide services for the current and emerging healthcare environment. Mechanisms to address issues of recognition for accomplishments,
opportunity for input into departmental decisions, and maintenance of a realistic workload in a stable environment are potential areas for manager focus. Ideally, management and the rehabilitation professional should work together to design a career satisfaction and job retention program that would be the most mutually beneficial.

Acknowledgments
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References
Every healthcare executive has been focusing on what attracts and retains professionals inside the organization, and this study reveals additional understanding of the key satisfaction factors by examining occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech-language pathologists. As described by Smith Randolph, the intrinsic factors—complementing extrinsic items such as pay or benefits—are not significantly unlike those that have also been identified as key retention motivators for nurses and others. The study is a great guide for the administrators of rehabilitation units or any facility that requires the services of one or more of these professionals.

Each of the three professions appears regularly over time on the list of difficult to find or retain personnel, and each has inspired some form of emergency recruitment strategy. In an ever-tightening healthcare workforce, this study of the satisfaction priorities can help executives to determine what needs to be emphasized or changed in their organizational environment to alleviate turnover. This work strongly points to the importance of personal growth, organizational values, and recognition. Similar to other health professionals, clinicians in these groups are more satisfied and more likely to stay in the organization when they believe they have a say in what happens in the work setting. These intrinsic satisfiers, according to the study, are more important than pay.

The research included a good sample of professionals. As this study reveals, compelling to healthcare decision makers, whether attempting to attract or retain one or another kind of clinician (occupational therapists, physical therapists, or speech-language pathologists), is the finding that more collegiality and recognition in the organization are critical to rehabilitation professionals. This contrasts with a traditional command-and-control hierarchy, which often has existed in hospitals and other health organizations, or the expedient and short-lived staffing strategies that only focus on pay or sign-on bonuses to offset staff shortages.

This article realistically identifies that a complex set of stress factors in the environment is the enemy of satisfiers for clinicians, and it helps to point directly to policies and practices that can have a long-lasting positive effect in areas where pay and benefits are not enough.