

OT Research 2013

Title: An Investigation of Favored Group Activities and Happiness in Older Adults within a Senior Living Complex

Researchers: Michael W. Devitt, OTS, Holly Haberern, OTS, Leah Redinski, OTS, Susan Smaka, OTS and Dr. Grace Fisher

Research Committee Chair: Dr. Grace Fisher

Reader: Sue Lennon MS OTR/L

Abstract:

Objective: The purpose of this study was to observe happiness levels of older adults residing in semi-independent living apartments and evaluate possible improvements following participation in a group-selected activities program.

Method: The study utilized a purposive sample of participants of both genders ranging from 76 to 95. The residents were informed of the study and of criteria to complete including a demographic survey, a happiness questionnaire, group discussions, and personal evaluations of the activities and process. This research utilized a mixed-method design which included a quantitative pre-test post-test as well as qualitative description.

Results: Quantitative results yielded no significant increase between pre- and post- testing; however, a positive increase in score was demonstrated in seven of the nine residents. Qualitative findings indicated that the activity program was well received and appeared to have positive influence on the mood of the participants at the time of the sessions.

Conclusion: Older adults living alone in congregate housing are at increased risk of feeling isolated due to mobility restrictions and limited opportunities for socialization. Involvement in occupational therapy programs tailored to this population's leisure interests facilitates group socialization and happiness.

Title: Occupational Balance in Religious Sisters of Mercy using Matuska and Christiansen's Life Balance Model.

Researchers: Michelle Bender, OTS, Tabitha Marquardt, OTS, Judy Myers, OTS, Maureen Roche, OTS, and Jane Zak OTS

Research Committee Chair: Dr. Grace S. Fisher

Reader: Dr. Joseph Cipriani, and Sue Lennon, MS, OTR/L

Abstract:

Many individuals in today's society experience increased stress, dissatisfaction with life, and diminished well-being (American Psychological Association, 2012; Zuzanek, 1998). The concept of achieving occupational balance is one approach to this issue. The Religious Sisters of Mercy (RSM) mentor others on achieving life satisfaction and spiritual peace. It may be useful to understand how they experience life balance. Our study explored occupational balance in the RSM. A balanced lifestyle is, "a satisfying pattern of daily occupation that is healthful, meaningful, and sustainable to an individual within the context of his or her current life circumstances (Matuska & Christiansen, 2008, p. 11)." Fifteen RSM were interviewed concerning the five dimensions of occupational balance defined by Matuska and Christiansen (2008). Interview data was transcribed and analyzed in accordance with the five dimensions. Findings were member checked during a group sharing session, followed by the optional development of life balance plans. A follow-up phone call was completed with those Sisters who did develop such plans. The prominent findings were the value of reflection; acceptance of life changes; supportive relationships in community; accountability; owning the quest for life balance; and gratitude. All participants reported satisfaction with their personal life balance.

Title: OT: ALOWD

Researchers: Alyssa DeCicco, OTS, Ashley Dinko, OTS, Lauren Lokuta, OTS, and Maura O'Rourke, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Patricia Wisniewski, MS, OTR/L, CPRP

Reader: Dr. Gwen Bartolacci

Abstract:

Many current assessments in the mental health field utilize a bottom-up approach, mainly focus on severity of symptoms, or focus on a specific area of function for adults living with severe mental illness (SMI) in the community. The purpose was to develop a comprehensive, client-centered, top-down, and functional screening tool to use with adults living with SMI in the community. The OT: ALOWD screening tool was developed and examines 12 topic areas (demographic information, observation, daily activities, health and wellness, safety, money management, employment, self-perception, time management, leisure, social participation, and cognition) containing various questions and observation measures to address the needs and functional levels of the target population. OT: ALOWD provides the occupational therapist with information that can be used collaboratively with the client to identify areas that require further evaluation, develop client-centered goals, prioritize treatment, create an individualized intervention plan, and plan outcomes. A modified Delphi method was utilized to refine the screening tool based on a researcher-constructed questionnaire. Consensuses were reached after the first and second waves of feedback, which were used to create the finalized screening tool making it comprehensive, client-centered, user friendly, and easy to administer.

Title: Crafting the Way to Improved Self-Esteem: Occupational Therapy in Adolescent Mental Health

Researchers: Liza Burkey, OTS, Ethan Eichhorst, OTS, Kelly Freuhauf, OTS, Brittany Rahn, OTS, and Jessica Yost, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Donna McCune and Catherine Miller MS OTR/L

Reader: Dr. Ellen McLaughlin

Abstract:

Objective: The focus of this study is to investigate if participating in craft activities will have a positive effect on the self-esteem of adolescents with emotional disturbance.

Methods: This research study utilized a single subject pre and post-test design across 13 participants. A descriptive component was also administered upon the completion of each session to receive detailed information about the participants' personal craft experience.

Results: Quantitative results yielded no significant changes in self-esteem between the pre and post-test, however, the mean score of three participants increased from pre-test to post-test. Four common themes emerged from the qualitative findings: learning something new, socialization, relaxation, and productivity.

Conclusion: The study's findings suggest that participating in a group craft activity positively influenced the participants as indicated by the themes which encouraged a sense of improved self-esteem.

Title: Life Balance: A Comparative Study of Retired and Working Occupational Therapists

Researchers: Matthew Cash, OTS, Moira Hauer, OTS, Jessica Mudgett, OTS, and Katie Moul, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Dr. Lalit J. Shah

Reader: Dr. Gwen Bartolacci

Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to compare life balance of working occupational therapists (OT) and those retired from the field. The study's objective was to understand if both working and retired OTs achieve life balance and if so did one group gain greater balance and what were those contributing factors. Lacking significant published literature, we hoped to gain better understanding of the life balance of our profession as a whole by comparing the two populations. Surveys were sent to both the work OT group (250) and the retired group (225) utilizing the Life Balance Inventory (LBI), developed by Dr. Kathleen Matuska (2012), a demographics questionnaire and two open ended questions inquiring about factors that affect life balance. The researchers had a 39% survey return rate, thus supplying an adequate understanding of both populations.

Through a thorough data analysis, both groups showed a level of balance with the retired group to live a more balanced lifestyle with some of the contributing factors being volunteerism, health, and leisure activities.

Title: Adolescent Perceptions of the Meaning of 'Healthy Lifestyle'

Researchers: Stephanie Forbes, OTS, Jessica Harper, OTS, Mary Hearn, OTS, and Matthew Wilcox, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Dr. Dawn Evans

Reader: Dr. Grace Fisher

Abstract:

Obesity is a major problem affecting the health of more and more people in American society, not excluding children and adolescents. Occupational therapy, with its unique perspective and skill set, is in a position to impact the health of those affected. Adolescence is a pivotal period in the development of one's life perceptions. An effort to intervene effectively with this age group must begin with an understanding of adolescents' perceptions of 'healthy lifestyle.' Interviews using a semi-structured 'healthy lifestyle' questionnaire were conducted with eight Eastern Pennsylvanian adolescents, five female and three male, ranging in age from eight to fourteen years old. Themes concerning perspectives of health and 'healthy lifestyle' were developed based on participants' responses. Three overarching themes emerged: defining and understanding the meaning of 'healthy lifestyle,' applying knowledge of 'healthy lifestyle' to self and daily life, and psychosocial aspects and self-perception. Subthemes emerged within each overarching theme. Themes are further discussed, concerning implications for intervention with the adolescent age group and occupational therapy's role.

Title: Outcome Measures for Assistive Technology

Researchers: Jaclyn Barletta, OTS, Christine Gustafson, OTS, Kelsey Olszewski, OTS, and Katie Pannabecker, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Denis Anson MS OTR

Reader: Dr. Joseph Cipriani

Abstract:

This study examines the effectiveness of the Assistive Technology Efficacy Tool (ATET) to measure change in functional capability of an individual using an assistive technology. The technology examined in this study is the wheelchair mounting device, Mount'n Mover. The project proposed to answer the following two questions: does providing a dynamic mounting device to a wheelchair or work station increase an individual's functional independence; and does ATET provide a measure of functional independence that is easily administered and stable enough for use in research efforts? The design for this study is a quasi-experimental AB comparison, and participants were recruited through flyers sent by the manufacturer of Mount'n Mover. Three responses were obtained, and two participants completed the interview using ATET. Participants were interviewed twice; once about their functional status prior to receiving the Mount'n Mover, and once about their functional status six months post receiving the Mount'n Mover. The ATET results indicated that the Mount'n Mover did not necessarily increase functional independence; however, it did allow individuals to participate on some level in more tasks. A second finding is that there was difficulty obtaining participants for this kind of remote interview study.

Title: Upper Extremity Limb Outcomes Before and After Cardiac Catheterization

Researchers: Melanie Galarza, OTS, Tabatha Gordon, OTS, Melissa Macario, OTS, and Veronica Yancewicz, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Dr. Lalit J Shah

Reader: Dr. Gwen Bartolacci

Abstract:

Objective:

The purpose of this research was to compare upper-extremity (UE) functions pre and post-cardiac catheterization.

Method:

Patients were administered a combination of the Matheson pain scale, range of motion testing, two-point discrimination testing, grip strength testing, pinch strength testing, and a subjective functional assessment both before and after transradial cardiac catheterization. Thirteen patients were divided into three groups. Group A and C combined totaled 8 objective data sets, and Group A and B combined totaled 9 subjective data sets.

Results:

Groups A and C had six subjects each with a change in pre and post-objective data, but two without changes. Four participants had an increase in grip strength post-catheterization. Two participants had a decrease in grip strength post-catheterization. Two participants had a decrease in pinch strength post-catheterization. Two participants had a decrease in two-point discrimination following catheterization; while one participant had an increase in two-point discrimination. The outcomes of Groups A and B indicated no significant change in UE function.

Conclusion:

Further studies were recommended to include a larger sample size with complete data collection to effectively determine the changes in UE function pre-catheterization and post-catheterization.

Title: Understanding the Factors that Influence Referrals to Occupational Therapy in Hospice

Researchers: Laine Bishop, OTS, Katina Kambakis, OTS, Virginia O'Reilly, OTS, Caitlin Sorrentino, OTS, and Kathleen Usher, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Thomas Swartwood MS, OTR/L

Reader: Dr. Ellen McLaughlin

Abstract:

This study sought to uncover factors influencing the referral process to occupational therapy in hospice. Seven interviews were conducted, transcribed, and analyzed with referring professionals within hospice. The findings were categorized into seven major themes and three minor themes. These themes identified a true role for occupational therapy in enhancing quality of life, engaging patients in highly valued occupations, and utilizing patients' capabilities; illustrated by the theme of positive responses expressed by patients and families. The barrier themes identified include; patients coming late in the disease process; changes within the organization and; some referrers felt they needed more knowledge of occupational therapy.

Conclusion: This study attempts to bridge the gap in the literature by exploring the referral process to occupational therapy in hospice within a healthcare organization. This study revealed a need and a role for occupational therapy in hospice care. Results from this study may provide additional knowledge to potentially increase occupational therapy participation in hospice.

Title: Investigation of the Meaning and Value of the Greenhouse Program for Clients at an Adult Inpatient Psychiatric Facility

Researchers: Jenna Georgia, OTS, Megan McChesney, OTS, Megan Stabler, OTS, and Jaclyn Tschantz, OTS

Research Committee Chair: Dr. Joseph Cipriani

Reader: Dr. Dawn Evans

Abstract:

The aim of this study was to investigate the meaning and value of the Greenhouse Program and its impact on the recovery goals of clients with severe and persistent mental illness residing in an adult inpatient psychiatric facility. Eight participants as well as two occupational therapists were interviewed and observed within a three day period. The interviews and observations were completed at the facility in the participants' natural environment. The semi-structured interviews focused on each participant's recovery goals, personal experiences, and worker responsibilities within the Greenhouse. Data analysis revealed six themes relating to the meaning of the Greenhouse Program and personal growth of the participants. These findings and themes suggest that a program similar to the Greenhouse Program may be an appropriate therapeutic intervention that can be used by occupational therapists in other adult inpatient psychiatric facilities.