

Abstracts

(in alphabetical order of last names)

Andare Lizzie

(June 2024)

How do Somali refugees with disabilities living in the Dadaab refugee camp experience occupational disruption from an intersectional perspective; a Short-term Ethnography study

Refugees with disabilities experience challenges transitioning to life in the refugee camp affected by their intersecting identities of having refugee status, living with disabilities and often their gender.

The experiences of six refugees with disabilities were gathered mainly through interviews and participant observation for five weeks in the Dadaab refugee camp, to understand their participation in meaningful activities.

This study uses an intersectional lens to highlight how multiple identities of refugees living with disabilities intersect with each other to create a compounded nature of occupational disruptions created by the conditions of a refugee camp and migration trajectories experienced.

By developing a nuanced understanding of occupational disruptions experienced by refugees with disabilities, occupational therapists and occupational scientists can enable meaningful participation, and improve the quality of the lives of refugees with disabilities.

Keywords: Occupational disruption, intersectionality, refugee status, disability status

Brezovar Tina

(June 2024)

An Interpretative Phenomenological study of Professional Identity Development among Slovenian Occupational Therapists practicing in Healthcare Institutions

Background: Occupational therapy has evolved into an acknowledged health profession globally. However, it still faces social recognition challenges in Slovenia, affecting employment and reimbursement policies, and consequently service accessibility. Recognizing the relationship between external recognition of occupational therapy and professional identity, this study aimed to explore how Slovenian occupational therapists practicing in healthcare institutions experience professional identity development.

Methods: Data were collected through nine semi-structured interviews and analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis, through which four themes with subthemes were developed to answer the research question.

Findings: Four themes emerged, capturing the lived experiences of professional identity development among Slovenian occupational therapists: 1) The ambiguous evolution of professional identity development; 2) Relationship between professional and personal identity; 3) Challenges in professional identity development arising from contextual barriers; 4) Maintaining a connection to occupational therapy through professional values, continuing education, and self-reflection.

Conclusions: Experiences of professional identity development by Slovenian occupational therapists practicing in healthcare institutions align with previous research describing it as a complex process occurring in phases. Challenges are contextual and inherent to this process but can be mitigated through deliberate efforts by occupational therapists. The findings underscore the importance of practical experiences and personal proactivity in professional identity development, providing a basis for future research to develop strategies for overcoming professional identity challenges and enhancing the development and social recognition of occupational therapy in Slovenia.

Keywords: occupational therapy, professional identity, contextual challenges, interpretative phenomenological analysis

do Carmo Ólason Erica

(June 2024)

“Work gives me a purpose”: an interpretative phenomenological analysis of the employment experience of four Icelandic adults diagnosed with Parkinson disease

Background: People with Parkinson Disease (PwPD) face difficulties in holding employment and are more likely to be retired long before healthy people of similar age. The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that disability due to PD is growing faster than predicted. There is a need for each country to find ways to help people with Parkinson Disease to stay employed.

Aim: The aim of this study was to understand how people with Parkinson in Iceland experience participation in work after the onset of PD.

Method: Using an Interpretive Phenomenological Approach, four interviews were conducted in Iceland in March and April 2024. The interviews were taken with two males and two females working professionals diagnosed with Parkinson disease.

Findings: Three themes emerged from the data analysis: (i) Accommodating PD, (ii) participating in work, (iii) Dealing with the enemy.

Discussion: PD symptoms affect occupational skills and occupational performance causing PwPD to have difficulties in participating in occupations. The participants reported adopting different strategies to support them in their work after the onset of PD. This study suggested that work pace can influence the experience PwPD have of work, but this idea needs further study.

Conclusion: The participants of this study expressed positive experience of participating in work after the onset of PD. It is possible that their experience was associated with the fact that they were needed professionals in their work fields and met more flexibility when working. There is a need to explore how Icelanders of othersocial classes experience their participation in work after the onset of PD.

Keywords: Parkinson’s disease, occupation participation, occupation performance, occupational skills, employment

Clinker Emma (June 2024)

NHS, A Culture of Belonging?

Background: The contemporary NHS represents a complex mix of socio-political structures and ideologies which influence staff behaviour towards each other. Some NHS staff feel like 'outsiders' in their multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs). Focusing on the MDT meeting as a micro society where the operation of power can be observed, the concept of belonging was investigated.

Purpose: Critical analysis of dominant discourses on staff belonging within the NHS to construct insights around how power relations in MDT meetings influence staff's 'doing', to provide alternative formulations for them to enact change.

Methods: This study adopted a qualitative, critical participatory approach. Seven participants were recruited from across the UK. In Round 1 open-ended questionnaires were used to generate vignettes. In Round 2, three critical dialogical interviews were completed. The data from both rounds were used to generate vignettes which authentically captured their intersubjective dialogue, in participants' own words. These were analysed in the context of hierarchical MDT power dynamics, occupational identity and performance.

Findings: Participants felt silenced in MDT meetings, their involvement limited and prescribed by others. Participants saw themselves as "isolated", and their sense of belonging tenuous, which impacted their contributions to the MDT meetings, and broader team.

Implications: The data presented here reveal how belonging impacts participants' occupational identity and the occupations they feel authorised to do by their team. This study has added insights to the occupational science literature around the links between 'belonging' and 'doing'.

Keywords: Belonging, hierarchy, occupational identity.

Cnudde Kelly (June 2024)

The opinions of Belgian occupational therapists on the current reimbursement system for occupational therapy in Belgium – a survey study

Background: Limited knowledge exists regarding the opinions of occupational therapists on the current reimbursement system for occupational therapy in Belgium. Currently, reimbursement is only provided for rehabilitation, under specific criteria, and post-COVID-19 nomenclature. This situation poses challenges for occupational therapists, including independent practitioners, as clients often cannot afford their services. Additionally, the Belgian population faces difficulties in accessing necessary therapy due to economic constraints.

Methods: A cross-sectional study design was conducted using an online survey, sent to occupational therapists in Belgium. The survey was developed after a pilot study with ten occupational therapists from various work fields, ages, and races. It included (socio)demographic, work-related, and opinion questions about the current reimbursement system and was available in the three national languages. Descriptive and inferential analyses were applied.

Results: A total of five hundred and thirteen responses were analysed. The majority of participants (73.9%) expressed dissatisfaction with the current reimbursement system for occupational therapy. A statistical significance difference in satisfaction was found between all the three work experience groups ($p = 0.033$) and specifically between work experience groups 2 and 3 ($p = 0.010$).

Conclusion: This is the first study addressing this specific topic in Belgium, highlighting significant implications for policy-making and practice. The results underscore the need for future research on occupational therapists in Belgium and the reimbursement system for occupational therapy.

Keywords: Cross-Sectional Studies – Health inequities – Online survey – Personal Satisfaction – Pilot Projects – Policy

Davelaar Esther (June 2024)

Occupational therapists perspectives' on and needs to be able to address issues of occupational injustice in the nursing home

Background: Occupational injustices exist within the nursing home. However, occupational injustices within nursing homes often receive little professional attention. It can be challenging to advance occupational injustices and daily occupational therapy practice often fails to confront those issues. A start would be raising consciousness of occupational justice within the context of the nursing home. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the occupational therapists' perspectives of occupational injustice in the nursing home and secondly, to explore and prioritize ideas on what occupational therapists need to be able to address issues of occupational injustice in the nursing home.

Methods: A Participatory Health Research was used for this study. Through purposive sampling, five occupational therapists were recruited. After obtaining consent, a focus group discussion and Metaplan were conducted.

Findings: (Participatory) thematic analysis yielded five themes: (1) Hard to find words to describe, (2) Road to the OT with all the barriers and the narrow view of the OT, (3) The influence of nursing home culture on residents' occupational status, (4) The need to get to know the nursing home resident and (5) Action for change.

Conclusion: Even though experiences, the occupational therapists are not familiar with the concept of occupational injustice and do not have the language to name these situations. To address issues of occupational injustice, the occupational therapists need to get to know the resident and nursing home better, a better collaboration with other professionals and inspiration.

Keywords: Occupational injustice. Nursing home. Occupational therapy. Occupational Science concepts

Heffernan Ciara (June 2024)

Occupational Therapists and the future National Health Insurance in South Africa: A study of practice and preparedness for the incoming system change

Background: South Africa (SA) has a healthcare system consisting of private and public sectors, characterised by disparities. A new government - run healthcare system is proposed, the National Health Insurance (NHI) offering universal health coverage for all. To support the role of occupational therapists (OTs) in this process, it is necessary to describe practice contexts, and investigate OT's preparedness for change towards the transition. The capability approach and change theory are utilised as theoretical lenses to frame these investigations, allowing a universal language across professions.

Methods: Cross-sectional study design using an online questionnaire sent to OTs in SA. The questionnaire mainly consisted of multiple-choice questions on demographics, working environment, ability to perform and satisfaction with performing tasks, and lastly how informed and prepared OTs are regarding the NHI. The questionnaire was piloted by a committee of nine OTs from SA. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied.

Results: One hundred and five responses were analysed. Participants showed reluctance towards the new system but expressed eagerness to engage in informative tasks. OTs in the public sector reported lower rates of satisfaction in terms of resources and work environment, and lower rated ability to perform work tasks.

Conclusion: This study provides preliminary information on the current OT practices in SA. It evaluates the preparedness of OTs regarding the change and conveys the need for further training and research into this matter.

Keywords: Healthcare system transformation, capability approach, change management, practice profile, intersectionality

Meijboom Teddy (June 2024)

*Sports Participation as Intervention or Goal in Occupational Therapy Practice
The Experiences of Dutch Occupational Therapists*

Introduction: Participating in sports, physical activity, or exercise can prevent and manage mental health conditions, improve sleep, enhance quality of life, and increase social participation. Occupational therapy views sports as leisure, often used as a means rather than an end goal. The inability to participate in chosen activities can cause occupational imbalance and is a form of occupational injustice. Occupational therapists focus on enabling and promoting participation in occupations to improve overall well-being by broadening their range of practice and tackling social and occupational inequalities that individuals with disabilities often encounter. This study explores the experiences of Dutch occupational therapists in using sports participation as an intervention or goal in their practice.

Methods: This qualitative study adopted a critical realist methodology, using semi-structured interviews and inductive and deductive thematic analysis to explore six occupational therapists' experiences of enabling people to participate in sports.

Findings: The findings resulted in three main themes and several subthemes: 1. The role of occupational therapy in sports; 2. The meaning and definition of sports, and 3. Reasons for prioritising or deprioritising sports in occupational therapy.

Conclusion: This study illustrated occupational therapists' supporting role in enabling sports and sports participation, suggesting added value to the field of sports due to occupational therapists' occupation-centred approach and holistic view of integrating sports into daily life. Finally, this study explained reasons for prioritising or deprioritising sports by clients, workplace characteristics, and practitioners' values and professional experiences.

Keywords: sports, sports participation, occupational therapy, occupational science

Quaaden Kinga

(June 2024)

Using Artificial Intelligence to Support Participation-Focused Interventions in Home and Community Settings: A Scoping Review

Background: Artificial intelligence offers promising solutions for promoting participation in occupations in home and community settings. To expand our understanding of how artificial intelligence can be leveraged in occupational therapy interventions in these settings, this scoping review aimed to identify and synthesize the current state of research on the use of artificial intelligence in interventions in a community- and home-based setting promoting the participation of adults with disabilities in occupations.

Methods: A comprehensive literature search was conducted using Applied Health and Computer Science databases. Inclusion criteria were: participation was an aim, outcome, or focus of the study; AI was applied in the intervention; designed for adults (18-65) with disabilities in home or community-based settings; studies obtained ethical approval; and were published from 2014 onwards in peer-reviewed venues.

Results: 21 studies were included, mostly originating from high-income countries (n=18/21; 86%) with limited sociodemographic data collected. Computer vision was the most common artificial intelligence application (n=11/21; 52%). A total of 43% (n=9/21) studies personalised interventions to individual needs and 10% of interventions (n=2/21;) incorporated personalised goal-setting. Participation was mostly (n=14/21; 67%) targeted as a secondary outcome and operationalised inconsistently among the studies.

Conclusions: Three main gaps were identified; (1) a lack of diversity in the origin of studies and limited data collection for sociodemographic information; (2) limited use of client-centred approaches incorporating individual personalisation and goal-setting; and (3) a lack of interventions targeting participation as their primary aim and operationalising participation in a way that aligns with occupational therapy's conceptualisation of participation.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence; Disability; Participation; Occupational therapy

Teufelhart Malena (June 2024)

Let them eat Burgers! A Critical Discourse Analysis on Occupational Possibilities of Children in Poverty in Austria

Background: Poverty is on the rise globally and a group that is proportionately more often affected in Austria are children. Their occupational possibilities are shaped by societal discourses about them, in means such as the media. This study aims to problematise the way children in poverty are portrayed in Austrian newspapers and how this representation shapes the children's occupational possibilities.

Methods: A critical discourse analysis was used. Data included newspaper articles published in 2023 and 2024 in four nation-wide, daily newspapers. An analysis sheet was applied, informed by critical theory and the 'what's the problem represented to be?' approach (Bacchi, 2009).

Findings: The analysis revealed three major discursive strands: the construction of the child in poverty, where a child eating good foods and studying well is idealised. A child not in education and unable to participate in certain social activities is deemed non-ideal. The same dichotomy is apparent in the construction of the parent of a child in poverty. The third strand are the idealised contexts the children are expected to navigate, such as public spaces tied to consumerism or educational institutions.

Conclusions: The results revealed an individualisation of child poverty and the framing of certain behaviours, aims and occupations as normalised and desirable and others as problematic or unfavourable. This study provides a complex understanding of occupation to inform occupational science and occupational therapy. It calls for diverse approaches and understandings of occupations to foster a just future for children in poverty.

Keywords: Child poverty, occupational possibilities, discourse

Turel Aleks (June 2024)

Cross-cultural validation of the Family Life Impact Questionnaire for use in Middle Europe

Introduction: The Family Life Impact Questionnaire (FLIQ) is a recently developed, occupation-focused assessment in pediatrics. It enables occupational therapists to adopt a top-down approach to evaluation and obtain caregivers' perceptions on the ease with which family members engage in interrelated occupations. The purpose of this cross-cultural study was to evaluate validity evidence of the FLIQ based on the internal structures across the world regions of Middle Europe (ME) and North America (NA).

Methods: This cross-sectional study analysed responses from caregivers of typically developing children, collected by occupational therapists in eight countries. We performed generic Rasch analyses to estimate person and item measures. We proceeded with performing differential item functioning (DIF) analysis to evaluate the stability of the FLIQ items across the two world regions.

Results: Generic Rasch analysis indicated a good fit for both items and persons after excluding two underfitting persons. The DIF analysis demonstrated that 32 out of 38 FLIQ items (84.21%) had stable item difficulty calibration measures across both groups. We detected three items being relatively less difficult for the NA group. Those items were related to the ease of the child's social interactions. Three items being less difficult for the ME group were related to the ease of engagement in interrelated occupations.

Conclusion: This study provides validity evidence for the use of the FLIQ in ME and NA. Additional studies are needed to support valid interpretation of its scores in other world regions.

Keywords: occupational therapy, differential item functioning, Rasch analysis, proxy Report

Zgonc Ema (June 2024)

Translation and cross-cultural adaptation of the Slovenian version of the Utrecht Scale for Evaluation of Rehabilitation-Participation. A face validity study

Background: Rehabilitation is essential for improving an individual's quality of life, with participation representing the highest level of functioning. There is a lack of participation-level instruments in Slovenian occupational therapy in rehabilitation. The aim of this study was to translate and culturally adapt the Utrecht Scale for Evaluation of Rehabilitation-Participation into the Slovene language and context and assess its face validity.

Methods: The study was conducted at the University Rehabilitation Institute, Republic of Slovenia. The translation and cross-cultural adaptation followed Beaton's guidelines. Face validity was evaluated through 12 cognitive interviews with diverse participants.

Findings: Identified challenges were categorized into five groups: comprehension, cognitive complexity, temporal component, rehabilitation context, and other considerations. These challenges highlighted areas that needed modifications to enhance the clarity and cultural appropriateness of the Slovenian version.

Conclusion: This study successfully translated and cross-culturally adapted the Utrecht Scale for Evaluation of Rehabilitation-Participation for the Slovene language and context, identifying key areas for improvement. The questionnaire may be a valuable tool in rehabilitation. Continued research to establish evidence of validity and reliability in clinical practice is needed.

Keywords: participation, occupational therapy, rehabilitation, cognitive interviewing