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Occupational Therapy Enhancing Psychosocial Factors: Through the Lens of Case Reports

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Keywords

occupational therapy, case reports, psychosocial, mental health

Cover Page Footnote

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Occupational therapy's roots are grounded in mental health populations and settings (Stoffel et al., 2019). Early therapists started the tradition continued to this day of occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants focusing on “doing,” specifically the doing of occupations (Stoffel et al., 2019). Even as the profession expanded and therapists specialized in meeting the needs of other groups, such as pediatric and adult rehabilitation or aging, occupation-based intervention continued to serve as the keystone of the occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants' contribution to mental health care. Similarly, the work of therapists in mental health recovery extends beyond traditional mental health settings. New challenges encourage therapists to consider these new settings, changing practice models that may initially be addressed using case reports.

This special section highlights the implementation of psychosocial assessment and intervention that support occupational performance in meaningful occupations across settings, populations, and conditions through a case report. The goals of the special section were to (a) assist occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants to understand better the assessment and intervention process designed to enhance participation in meaningful occupations for patients and clients with mental health challenges as a result of varying conditions, including physical dysfunction; (b) facilitate a discussion of how occupational therapy professionals can imbed psychosocial assessments and interventions as part of their routine care plans with a variety of populations in diverse settings; (c) disseminate knowledge related to the occupational therapist's diverse roles in the application of psychosocially focused interventions as part of routine practice; and (d) highlight the value of embedding psychosocial assessments and interventions across the lifespan in diverse settings. The CARE Case Report Guidelines (<https://www.care-statement.org>) were used as the structure for the case reports in this special section.

A case report has been defined as a “single patient retrospective description” for publication (Alpi & Evans, 2019, p. 1), though not considered proper research (Portney, 2020). Case reports often provide a first exploration of a phenomenon, atypical client deficit, assessment with unique clients or non-traditional settings, intervention approach with diverse populations, ethical issues, the natural progression of a condition or comorbidities, and delivery of services under unique circumstances (Portney, 2020; Riley et al., 2017). In addition, case reports may be common ways of sharing events or efforts of intervening with a single client with previously unreported features (Alpi & Evans, 2019) with an additional focus on the clinical reasoning behind the approach taken by the clinician (Portney, 2020; Riley et al., 2017).

The special section includes five case reports that span various practice settings, such as community-based and outpatient hospital-based, pediatric, adult, and geriatric, and conditions, such as autism spectrum disorder, chronic pain, and cancer. All of the case reports focus on enhancing participation in meaningful occupations for patients and clients with mental health challenges because of varying conditions, including physical dysfunction.

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