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Health and Wellness Using Occupations to Explore Internal Motivators for Change

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Promotion of Health & Wellness Using an Occupation-Focused Program to Explore Internal Motivators for Change

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BACKGROUND

The number of Americans living with Alzheimer’s Disease (AD) is expected to grow up to 16 million by 2050 (Smallfield & Heckenlaible, 2017). The risk for developing it could be reduced through lifestyle modifications (Hussenoeder & Riedel-Heller, 2018). Using occupation as a means for health promotion and disease prevention is an emerging area for occupational therapy practice (AOTA, 2014).

PROBLEM

Occupational therapy’s role in prevention is not widely recognized. as a profession they have potential to bring awareness and a plan of action towards health promotion before an onset develops (Burson et al., 2010).

PURPOSE

This capstone sought to increase awareness of internal motivators which could help foster healthy behaviors integrated into lifestyle to potentially assist in reducing the risk of Alzheimer’s disease (AD).

Assessment Tools

- Health Promoting Activities Scale (HPAS)
- World Health Organization Quality of Life-BREF (WHOQOL-BREF)

Conceptual Framework

- Health-Belief Model (HBM)

METHODS

A needs assessment was conducted to understand current lifestyle patterns and one’s perceptions on their quality of life across the lifespan of adults who do not have a diagnosis of AD.

- Anonymous online survey
- Observation of a current healthy living program at the Alzheimer’s Association
- Collaborative presentation with Alzheimer’s Association on their healthy living program
- An interactive occupation-focused PowerPoint based on findings from the survey

General Program Goals

- Increase participant understanding of the implications of their lifestyle choices
- Increase awareness of internal motivators that may foster health-promoting behavior change
- Identify barriers that limit optimal engagement, support systems, and strategies that can foster change

Interventions

- Education on incorporation of healthy lifestyle choices impacting the risk of AD
- Addressing the importance of mindset and leisure occupations, and its role on healthy living
- Reflective exercises to evaluate current lifestyle and ways to enhance quality of life through occupation

RESULTS

Survey Findings in Relation to AD (n=40)

Age	%
Young Adults (18-39)	40%
Middle-aged Adults (40-59)	45%
Older Adults (60+)	15%
Family History of AD	
Yes	56%
No	36%
Unsure	8%
Concern for Developing AD	
Yes	94%
No	6%

Lifestyle and Perceptions

- Majority reported to have a “good,” or “very good” QOL, health satisfaction, enjoyment of life, and meaningful life
- Leisure engagement had a lower reporting compared to other lifestyle areas
- Majority reported to have access to resources, tools, and information needed for everyday living
- All participants use virtual technology for their everyday living

Existing Barriers Inhibiting Optimal Participation

- Busy schedule/limited time
- Financial limitations
- Current health conditions
- COVID-19 restrictions

Gathered Themes

Theme	Codes
Embracing Motivators for Change	Social Circle, Online Networks, Future, Internet, Religion, Self-motivation, Pets, Therapy, Positivity, Nature, Workplace, Current Profession, Media
Health Promotion through Leisure	Physical Activity, Cognitive Engagement, Socialization, Meditation Outdoor Activities, Pet Care, Music
Adapting through Virtual Technology	Researching, Video Games, Working at Home, Texting, Phone Calls, Video Calling, Audio, Health-related Applications

DISCUSSION

Implications for Occupational Therapy

Future steps for this program could include programming which could be specific to common occupations that surround a particular age group to motivate and enable health-promoting change. Collaboration with community organizations will seek to raise awareness on occupational therapy’s role on prevention. The interactive occupation-focused component of the program will continue with Alzheimer’s Association.

CONCLUSION

This capstone contributed to the emerging area of AD prevention for occupational therapy. Participants were encouraged to consider the long-term implications of their current lifestyle and make adaptations as necessary to having a more favorable health outlook while being engaged in meaningful activities which lead to a purposeful life.

