

4-14-2022

Exploring the Occupational Impact of Pregnancy and the Role of Occupational Therapy During the Prenatal Period

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Recommended Citation

Wutzke, M., Park, K., & MacDermott, S. (2022, April 14). Exploring the Occupational Impact of Pregnancy and the Role of Occupational Therapy During the Prenatal Period. Poster presented at the Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. Retrieved from <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstones-spring2022/10>

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Exploring the Occupational Impact of Pregnancy

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BACKGROUND

- Pregnancy is a major transitional period in an individual's life accompanied by many physical and psychological changes and these changes have been found to impact one's ability to engage in daily occupations (Guo et al., 2020; Sepulveda, 2019; Yikar & Nazik, 2019).
- Existing research addresses how the different symptoms of pregnancy impact certain occupations, however limited research has been done connecting the prenatal period to occupational therapy (OT) practice.
- Research is being guided towards OT practices for women with significant comorbidities during the prenatal period, with limited clinical evidence or support for "well" pregnant women (Slootjes, 2016).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact pregnancy has on an individual's roles, routines, and daily occupations. This study aimed to investigate this through an OT lens in order to better identify how the needs of pregnant individuals fall within the scope of OT.

METHODS

- Survey participants (n=42) recruited from social media postings, prenatal support businesses, and snowball sampling.
- Interviewed participants (n=8) via Zoom for for a duration of 30-45 minutes.
- Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by student researcher and data organized and coded through Dedoose.
- Braun & Clarke (2006) thematic analysis method: 4 themes identified and supported through the data.

Acknowledgement: A very special thank you to Negin Zare, DPT, MOT, OTR/L & Lisa Ferch, MOT, OTR/L

RESULTS

Themes	Descriptors	Quotes
Change in Occupational Form	During the prenatal period, there is often a change in the way daily occupations are structured and organized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We would do like a little 30 routine with like weights but pretty much during the second trimester I stopped doing that and I would do more of like a yoga..." • "I can't go to the gym and do my normal routine...walking and yoga have become my primary ways of exercise" • "Our types of social activities have definitely changed"
Decrease in Ability to Participate in Meaningful Occupations	During pregnancy, an individual's overall ability to engage in desired or needed tasks can be limited.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Like you can't do anything! Like I am here on a snowboarding trip and I can't even snowboard" • "I couldn't give 100% into what I was doing at any time" • "I do feel like I'm also more limited in what I can do"
Temporality Impacting Occupational Engagement	Pregnancy tends to lead to a shift in one's temporal environment which impacts engagement in daily activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I have to set aside more time of my day for some preparation" • "My routines start a little later than they normally would umm just because I'm just like still tired when I wake up" • "It's just slower or um I have to think about it like to adapt or modify whatever I am doing...Just trying to preplan what I am doing"
Decrease in Perceived Quality of Occupational Engagement	Throughout the prenatal period, physical factors negatively impact the quality of engagement in needed and meaningful occupations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "My sleep at night has definitely been hindered because I am uncomfortable and having to move positions and not being able to sleep on my back..." • "So nutrition, I have morning sickness so I don't want to eat...so I have had to like start forcing myself like to eat" • "Walking and yoga have become my primary ways of exercise...so it's harder because I don't want to do it"

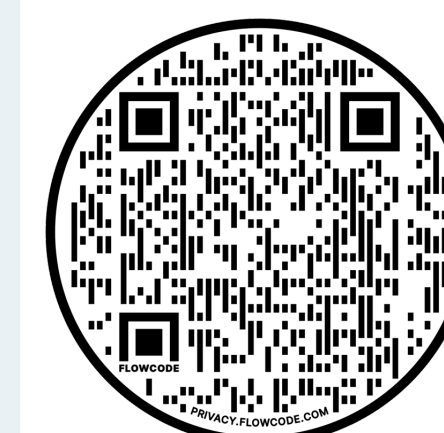
DISCUSSION

Pregnancy evidently impacts one's roles, routines, and daily occupations and this study further illustrates the way in which pregnancy can manifest change in one's day to day life. These findings help expand on existing literature and provide a more in-depth understanding of how the needs of this population fall within the scope of OT. There is a distinct connection between the changes that accompany the prenatal period and the scope of OT.

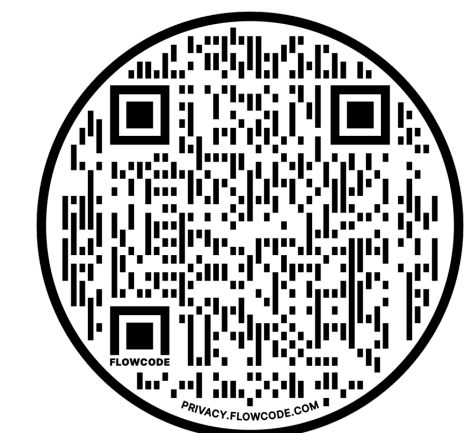
IMPLICATIONS FOR OT

- Results further identify the occupational needs of this population and contribute to an area of limited research.
- OTs can support pregnant individuals in areas such as: continued engagement in meaningful occupations, adapting new forms of occupations, routine management, education of pregnancy related resources, and supporting mental health and coping with pregnancy related changes.

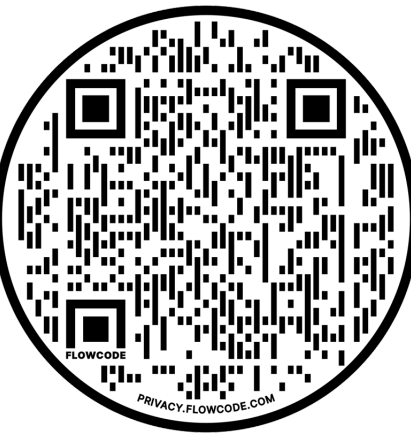
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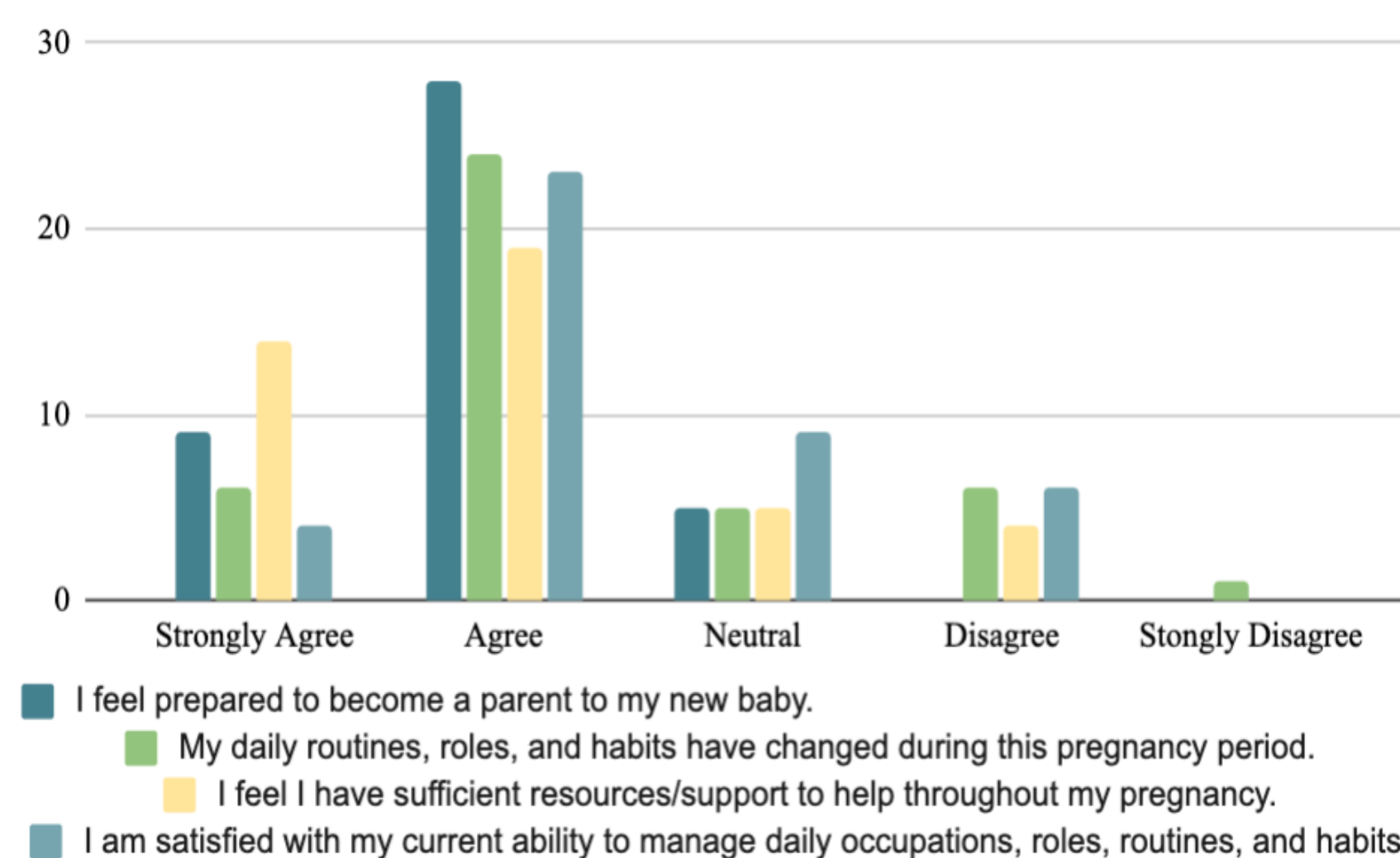
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References



Participants' Perceived Experiences During Pregnancy



Likert Scale Questions

Likert Scale Questions	Before Pregnancy	During Pregnancy
How would you rate your participation in rest and sleep?	4.12	3.21
How would you rate your participation in social activities?	4.07	3.28
How would you rate your participation in physical activity?	3.76	2.96
How would you rate your participation in nutrition management?	3.76	3.57
How would you rate your participation in work/education?	4.38	3.93
How would you rate your participation in home management?	4.21	3.48
How would you rate your participation in sexual activity?	4.07	3.07

1-Very Poor 2-Poor 3-Fair 4-Good 5-Very Good