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A Scoping Review on the Role of Occupational Therapy with Breast Cancer Survivors

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BACKGROUND

Breast cancer survivors (BCS) suffer from treatment side effects that adversely impact occupation. Occupational therapy (OT) plays a role in the treatment of BCS, but the literature has not clearly defined the role of OT with this population (Wallis et al., 2019).

PROBLEM

OT practice in the treatment of breast cancer survivors has not been systematically reviewed in the literature, leading to the absence of a clearly defined role delineation of OT practitioners.

PURPOSE

To conduct a scoping review of the literature to clearly define the role of OT in addressing the occupational needs of breast cancer survivors

METHODS

Employed methodology outlined by Arksey and O'Malley (2005):

1. Identify the research question?

“What is the role of OT in addressing the occupational needs of BCS?”

2. Identify relevant studies:

- Literature search through EBSCOhost and Mendeley

3. Study selection:

- Abstract screening (n= 81)
- Eligibility screening (n=79)
- Inclusion Criteria: published 2010 to present, written in the English, and interventions for breast cancer survivors who have completed curative treatment (i.e., surgery and adjuvant therapy including chemotherapy, and/or radiation) that are within the OT scope of practice
- **34 articles met inclusion criteria**

4. Chart the data

- Summary table: constructs of the model of human occupation (MOHO), assessments, OT specific intervention, and other interventions within the scope of OT

5. Collate, summarize, and report the results

RESULTS

Frequency of constructs of MOHO addressed: Volition (n=23), habituation (n=21), performance capacity (n=31), environment (n=16)

Reported actions that defined the role of OT with BCS :

- Assess occupational performance and participation (n=8)
- Set goals to overcome occupational performance challenges (n=8)
- Interventions to Support Occupations
 - Education and application of cognitive management strategies (n=3)
 - Prepare BCS for returning to work (n=1)
 - Education and development of adaptive lifestyle habits (n=1)
- Occupations and activities as therapy
 - Behavioral activation and problem solving (n=2)
 - Employ “OT yoga” (n=1)

Additional interventions within the scope of OT that are performed by other clinicians, but not included in OT literature:

- Aerobic and resistance exercise (n=7)
- Education and application of mindfulness (n=6)
- Application of imagery exercises (n=5)
- Discussions on shared experiences (n=5)
- Education and reflection on body image issues and sexual functioning (n=3)
- Lymphedema symptom management (n=2)
- Practice of emotional regulation and coping strategies (n=2)
- Yoga (n=2)
- Listening and singing to music and playing musical instruments (n=1)
- Self-care activity schedule (n=1)

References

- Wallis, A., Meredith, P., & Stanley, M. (2019). Cancer care and occupational therapy: A scoping review. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 67(2), 172–194. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1440-1630.12633>
- Arksey, H., & O'Malley, L. (2005). Scoping studies: Towards a methodological framework. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory & Practice*, 8(1), 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1364557032000119616>