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Exploring the Occupation of Rest

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BACKGROUND

Rest is an activity that has been studied in many health professions due to the fluidity of its meaning and the benefits it can provide its partakers. It has been shown to have positive impacts heart rate, blood pressure, anxiety, depression, insomnia, improved coping abilities, and bring a sense of calmness and confidence (Ryu, 2018). The field of occupational therapy has always emphasized the importance and relevance of participation in rest (Meyer, 1922). Rest is often viewed as synonymous to sleep, but it's a concept that encompasses far more aspects of the human experience.

PROBLEM

Research from multiple authors and fields of practice have contributed to the literature on rest. However, there is little known about how rest and restful occupations are addressed in occupational therapy practice.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this project was to explore how the occupation of rest is understood and addressed within occupational therapy practice. Many passages in books and articles on rest limit its definition to sleep, which overlooks many of its unique components. The overall intent is to increase available literature that will inform readers why rest should be respected as an important occupation.

METHODS

Research

- An online survey was created to ask participants questions about their knowledge and use of rest in practice.
- Participants: occupational therapy practitioners (OTPs) worldwide and in any practice setting (N=79). Recruitment was done through online forums and webpages specifically for OTPs.
- The survey consisted of open and closed ended questions and took an average of 12 minutes to complete.

Proposed Assessment

- Based off information from this survey, a proposed assessment for rest was created.
- It was presented as an activity for a class lecture with occupational therapy students. From there responses, further modifications were made.

Scan this code to access the proposed rest assessment



RESULTS

Addressing Rest in Practice

OTPs in this group (N=58) were asked questions that would help to further understand how and why they address rest.

How OTPs address rest	Through skills that could lead to rest. This includes time management, energy conservation, physical agent modalities, coping skills, and lifestyle balance.
How they know when to address rest	Concentration, prior knowledge/experience, for healing/recovery.
The motivation for addressing rest	Health/wellness, prevention, occupational balance; personal beliefs; improved outcomes and quality of life.

Not Addressing Rest in Practice

OTPs in this group (N=21) were asked questions on why they do not address rest.

- **Barriers to addressing rest:** time, reimbursement, limited knowledge, motivational or environmental barriers and relevance.

Restful Occupations

Some OTPs (N=9) answered they addressed rest in practice but did not address restful occupations. The reverse is also true.

OTPs answered they were addressed through engagement in leisure activities or hobbies; doing breathing exercises; visualization; stretching or gentle movements; emotional regulation; and education.

Additionally, 14 participants answered that they helped their clients identify restful occupations for themselves.

THEMES

Disconnect Between Knowledge and Application	OTPs knowledge of rest is sufficient. However, using rest in practice did not match their definition of rest.
Addressing Rest is Largely Not Occupation-Based	OTPs focused on education, encouragement / motivation, and advocating for methods rather than engaging in activities. - "I encourage clients to incorporate periods of rest in their daily routines."
A Need to Broaden Scope on Addressing Rest	More in-depth aspects of rest are not as addressed as more obvious parts of rest. - "I put a focus on creative occupations <i>which tend to be restful</i> "

DISCUSSION

Future Implications

This research revealed the need to provide more in-depth interventions to clients on rest. The specifics of the educational pieces provided by OTPs remains unclear. As this was the most answered way they addressed rest, interviews of OTPs would help to get a better idea of rest being used in this way.

Additionally, most OTPs stated an assessment for rest would make it easier to address. Finalizing an assessment for practitioners to use is the continuing step of this project. It is a hope that this tool will be used to better understand and assist our clients.



Scan for references