



## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN GERIATRIC CARE: ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE AND INDEPENDENCE.

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### Abstract:

Occupational therapy plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life and independence of older adults. This essay explores the significance of occupational therapy in geriatric care and how it can improve the overall well-being of seniors. Through a comprehensive review of literature, this essay discusses the methods, results, and implications of occupational therapy interventions in geriatric care. The findings suggest that occupational therapy is an effective and valuable approach in promoting independence, functional abilities, and overall quality of life among older adults. By focusing on person-centered care and addressing individual needs, occupational therapists can help older adults maintain their autonomy and dignity as they age.

**Keywords:** Occupational therapy, geriatric care, quality of life, independence, aging, functional abilities, person-centered care

### Introduction:

As the global population continues to age, the demand for geriatric care services has significantly increased. Older adults often face various physical, cognitive, and psychosocial challenges that can impact their quality of life and independence. Occupational therapy, as a holistic and client-centered approach, plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges and promoting the well-being of older adults. By focusing on enhancing functional abilities, improving independence, and addressing barriers to participation in meaningful activities, occupational therapy can help older adults maintain their autonomy and dignity as they age.

Evaluating the effectiveness of public health interventions in reducing disease transmission is a critical aspect of assessing the impact and success of various interventions. Here are some key considerations and approaches for evaluating the effectiveness of public health interventions:

**Study design:** Selecting an appropriate study design is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of public health interventions. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) are considered the gold standard when feasible, as they allow for rigorous evaluation of interventions by comparing an intervention group to a control group. However, RCTs may not always be feasible or ethical for certain public

health interventions. In such cases, quasi-experimental designs, observational studies, or ecological studies can be used to assess the impact of interventions.

**Outcome measures:** Clearly defining outcome measures is crucial for evaluating intervention effectiveness. These measures can include disease incidence, prevalence, morbidity, mortality, or other relevant indicators. Additionally, intermediate outcome measures such as changes in knowledge, behavior, or healthcare-seeking patterns can provide insights into the mechanism of action and help understand the intervention's impact on disease transmission.

**Comparison groups:** Establishing appropriate comparison groups is essential to evaluate intervention effectiveness accurately. This involves comparing disease outcomes between populations exposed to the intervention and those not exposed or exposed to different interventions. Care must be taken to ensure comparability and minimize confounding factors that may influence the outcomes.

**Data collection and analysis:** Collecting high-quality data is critical for evaluating intervention effectiveness. This may involve surveillance systems, registries, surveys, medical records, or other relevant sources. Quantitative data analysis techniques such as statistical modeling, regression analysis, and time series analysis can be used to assess the impact of interventions while controlling for confounding factors. Qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, can provide insights into the acceptability, feasibility, and contextual factors influencing intervention effectiveness.

**Cost-effectiveness analysis:** Assessing the cost-effectiveness of public health interventions is important for resource allocation and decision-making. Cost-effectiveness analysis compares the costs of implementing interventions to the health outcomes achieved. This analysis helps determine the value for money and informs policy decisions regarding the scalability and sustainability of interventions.

**Real-world implementation challenges:** Evaluating intervention effectiveness in real-world settings requires considering the complexities of implementation, contextual factors, and potential challenges. Factors such as population characteristics, healthcare infrastructure, cultural considerations, and adherence to interventions can impact effectiveness. Evaluations need to account for these factors and provide insights into the practical implications and feasibility of interventions.

**Long-term impact and sustainability:** Assessing the long-term impact and sustainability of public health interventions is crucial. Some interventions may have short-term effects on disease transmission, while others may have sustained impact over time. Evaluations should consider the durability of intervention effects, potential for emergence of unintended consequences, and the ability to maintain intervention effectiveness in the long run.

**Collaboration and knowledge exchange:** Collaboration between researchers, public health agencies, policymakers, and other stakeholders is vital for evaluating intervention effectiveness. Sharing knowledge, data, and best practices fosters a collective understanding of intervention impact, facilitates evidence-based decision-making, and enables the implementation of effective interventions at scale.

The evaluation of public health interventions requires a multidisciplinary approach, combining epidemiological methods, health economics, behavioral sciences, and implementation research. It is essential to continuously assess and improve evaluation methodologies to generate robust evidence on the effectiveness of interventions in reducing disease transmission and improving population health.

Occupational therapy plays a crucial role in geriatric care by promoting the well-being, independence, and quality of life of older adults. Here are some ways in which occupational therapy enhances the quality of life and independence for older adults:

**Activities of daily living (ADLs) training:** Occupational therapists assess and address the individual's ability to perform essential self-care tasks, such as bathing, dressing, grooming, toileting, and feeding. Through ADL training, therapists help older adults regain or maintain their independence in these activities, considering their physical, cognitive, and emotional capabilities.

**Instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) support:** IADLs encompass more complex tasks that are necessary for independent living, such as meal preparation, housekeeping, managing medications,

transportation, and managing finances. Occupational therapists assist older adults in developing strategies, modifying their environment, and using adaptive equipment to facilitate successful engagement in IADLs.

**Fall prevention and safety assessments:** Falls are a significant concern for older adults. Occupational therapists conduct comprehensive assessments of the home environment to identify potential hazards and make appropriate recommendations for modifications. They also provide education on fall prevention strategies, balance training exercises, and recommend assistive devices to reduce the risk of falls.

**Cognitive rehabilitation:** Occupational therapists work with older adults experiencing cognitive decline or impairment, such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease. They employ cognitive rehabilitation techniques to improve memory, attention, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. These interventions aim to maximize independence and functional abilities while maintaining safety and quality of life.

**Adaptive equipment and assistive technology:** Occupational therapists evaluate the need for and recommend appropriate adaptive equipment and assistive technology to enhance older adults' independence. This may include mobility aids like walkers or wheelchairs, home modifications, grab bars, reachers, or devices that improve communication and safety, such as emergency call systems or medication reminders.

**Energy conservation and activity pacing:** Older adults may have limited energy levels or chronic conditions that affect their stamina. Occupational therapists teach energy conservation techniques and activity pacing strategies to help individuals prioritize tasks, manage fatigue, and optimize their ability to engage in meaningful activities throughout the day.

**Community reintegration and social participation:** Maintaining social connections and engagement in community activities is essential for older adults' well-being. Occupational therapists assist individuals in identifying meaningful activities, hobbies, and social opportunities. They may facilitate group programs, outings, or recommend community resources to support social participation and combat social isolation.

**Falls prevention and exercise programs:** Occupational therapists play a role in designing and implementing falls prevention and exercise programs specific to the needs of older adults. These programs focus on improving strength, balance, flexibility, and coordination to reduce the risk of falls and promote overall physical well-being.

**Caregiver education and support:** Occupational therapists provide education and support to family caregivers, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to assist older adults in their care. This includes training in safe transfers, proper body mechanics, effective communication strategies, and stress management techniques.

**Palliative care and end-of-life support:** Occupational therapists address the unique needs of older adults receiving palliative or end-of-life care. They focus on comfort, dignity, and maximizing quality of life during this stage. Therapists may provide recommendations for positioning, pain management, communication strategies, and emotional support for both the individual and their family.

Occupational therapists collaborate with other members of the healthcare team, including physicians, nurses, social workers, and physical therapists, to develop comprehensive care plans tailored to the specific needs and goals of older adults. By addressing physical, cognitive, emotional, and environmental factors, occupational therapy contributes significantly to enhancing the quality of life and promoting independence in geriatric care.

### **Method:**

To explore the role of occupational therapy in geriatric care, a comprehensive review of literature was conducted. Various databases, including PubMed, CINAHL, and PsycINFO, were searched for relevant studies and articles on the topic. The search terms used included "occupational therapy,"

"geriatric care," "quality of life," "independence," and "aging." Studies published in peer-reviewed journals from the past ten years were included in the review.

### **Results:**

The literature review revealed that occupational therapy interventions in geriatric care are highly effective in improving the quality of life and independence of older adults. These interventions often focus on enhancing functional abilities, such as mobility, self-care, and cognitive skills, through individualized treatment plans. Occupational therapists work closely with older adults to identify their specific needs and goals, and then develop strategies to help them achieve those goals. By incorporating meaningful activities and promoting engagement in daily life tasks, occupational therapy interventions can significantly improve the overall well-being of older adults.

### **Discussion:**

Occupational therapy interventions in geriatric care are based on the principles of person-centered care, which prioritize the individual needs and preferences of older adults. By taking a holistic and client-centered approach, occupational therapists can address the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of aging. This approach allows older adults to maintain their independence, dignity, and sense of purpose as they age. Occupational therapy interventions may include physical exercises, cognitive training, adaptive equipment, environmental modifications, and caregiver education to support older adults in their daily activities.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, occupational therapy plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of life and independence of older adults. By focusing on individual needs, promoting functional abilities, and addressing barriers to participation, occupational therapists can help older adults maintain their autonomy and dignity as they age. The results of this literature review suggest that occupational therapy interventions in geriatric care are effective and valuable in promoting the overall well-being of older adults. Future research should continue to explore the benefits of occupational therapy in geriatric care and further establish its role in promoting healthy aging.

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