



Editors (L-R) – Valerie Wright-St Clair, Clare Hocking, Jenni Mace & Sandy Rutherford

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WELCOME TO THE 20TH ISSUE OF SPOTLIGHT ON OCCUPATION

This issue of Spotlight focuses on people's participation in sport occupations. The focus is timely; over 10,000 Olympic, and over 4000 Paralympic athletes recently competed in 306 individual and/or team events in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Yet, one team captured the public heart; the Refugee Olympic Team. In the midst of an unprecedented number of displaced persons seeking refuge beyond their domestic borders, the Refugee Olympic Team championed a fundamental human spirit for wholehearted engagement in occupations that challenge the mind/body. Then there were those who used Olympic sports as a tool for social justice, opening up sports participation to disadvantaged populations through 'Reaching for Rio'. Read some of the inspiring stories: <http://www.bbc.com/sport/olympics/36683254>.

It would be heartening to hear similar stories of sport occupations as social justice occupations as New Zealand prepares to host the 2017 World Masters Games.

Feel free to hand Spotlight on to anyone who might be interested in it or contact Annis to be added to the distribution list – ahuang@aut.ac.nz.

Perceptions Towards Aqua-Based Exercise Among Older Adults with Osteoarthritis Who have Discontinued Participation in this Exercise Mode

Authors: Alison Fiskén, Debra Waters, Wayne Hing, & Justin Keogh

Summary: Water-based exercises are commonly recommended to reduce pain, and increase everyday participation for older adults with osteoarthritis (OA). This study explored what influenced older adults with OA to cease participation in an aqua-based exercise programme. Eleven women (6 NZ European, 2 Māori, 3 other ethnicity), and no men, volunteered. They were aged 60+, had an OA diagnosis, and previously participated in aqua-fitness or aqua-jogging classes. The women participated in one, of two, focus groups talking about their experiences of the benefits and barriers to group aqua-exercise. The narrative data were analysed using a general inductive approach. As well as the benefit of being able to do more in the water, the women felt the classes were a good reason to get out of the house, and to socialise with others. Yet, they stopped because of the barriers they experienced, including: the absence of age-specific classes, and having instructors unfamiliar with impairment-specific needs; the fast-paced, strenuous exercises; experiencing the water and environment as too cold; and the costs of attending on a limited budget. While these women had all stopped attending, they talked about attending in the future, if the programmes address the barriers to their participation.



Comment: Just over half of the participants identified as NZ European. I feel this was a missed opportunity to explore cultural influences for these older women. This small, qualitative study used rigorous methods, and the results are not out-of-step with larger, cross-sectional, exercise-focused studies with older adults; so I suggest you can put some faith in the findings. The results were not intended to be generalisable, but they raise important considerations for practitioners designing and delivering therapy-focused physical exercise programmes for older women.

Reference: (2016). *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, 35(1), 12-17. doi:10.1111/ajag.12167

High-intensity sports for post-traumatic stress disorder and depression: Feasibility study of Ocean Therapy with veterans of 'Operation Enduring Freedom' and 'Operation Iraqi Freedom'.

Authors: Rogers, C. M., Mallinson, T., & Peppers, D.

Summary: Surfing is described as a high intensity and transformative sport. This study explored the feasibility of a 5-week programme for assisting returned service men with PTSD reintegrate into civilian life. Ocean Therapy™ has been developed in partnership with the University of Southern California and is a variation of the Lifestyle Redesign™ program. Components of the programme include experiential learning, group discussion and social participation, carefully tailored to the challenges of the target population.

Comment: Using surfing with a culture comparable to the military combined with storytelling, produced significant results for the participants in this study. A great example of the benefits of an in-depth understanding of both an occupation and the person as an occupational being as a foundation for intervention.

Reference: (2014). *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 68(4), 395-404. doi:10.5014/ajot.2014.011221

Openness to difference: Inclusion in sports occupations for children with (dis)abilities

Authors: Asbjørnslett, M., & Bekken, B.

“Brian is good at developing his own strategies and rules... The other pupils accept and appreciate these rules. For example... he either gets to start earlier or can run a shorter distance... a relay race is no fun if he doesn't have his own rules.” (P. 440)

Summary: This Norwegian study presents a mother's stories of how her son was included in organised sports, which are described as opportunities for children to engage with other children. The central idea is that social ideologies, such as disability, have real consequences for the possibilities and choices open to people. Viewed from a socio-cultural perspective, children's right to participate in sports and other occupations is protected by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). In Norway, that right is upheld by Norwegian governmental policies specifying “the greatest feasible integration, enjoyment and participation” in all local sports (p. 435). The findings demonstrate how differences in capacity can be not just accommodated, but accepted, encouraged and appreciated. That comes about through the interplay of the child, as author of his own strategies for participation, and the cooperative actions of other players. The overall message is that (dis)ability – so termed to emphasise abilities rather than impairments – is not a barrier to inclusion if societies value inclusion.

Comment: The authors provide a refreshing view of sport as “what we do together” on equal terms. Where other researchers have focused on the exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation of disabled children, or presented their plight as a personal tragedy, this study is a rare example of how inclusion can be practised. It highlights the attitudes and practices that make that possible – amongst the children, coaches, spectators and society in general. While acknowledging the skill, sensitivity and time invested by the sports coach, perhaps the missing ingredient in other contexts is the political will to mandate inclusion.

Reference: (2016). *Journal of Occupational Science*, 23(4), 434–445. doi:10.1080/14427591.2016.1199389

Football's coming home: A critical evaluation of The Homeless World Cup as an intervention to combat social exclusion

Authors: Magee, J., & Jeanes, R.

Summary: Prompted by conflicting research relating to the success of sport as a vehicle for social inclusion, the authors of this article undertook an interpretivist study to capture the perspectives of six participants in the Homeless World Cup (HWC). Using structuration theory, the authors consider how participants engaged with the social structure of the HWC whilst considering the broader context of their lives. Drawing on interviews and observations, the first main theme looks at the benefits of engaging in the HWC such as the chance to get away from the realities of real life, improved well-being, decreased substance abuse, increased friendships and personal pride. The second main theme highlights the challenges and intensity of participating in the actual tournament which included heightened anxiety, humiliation from large defeats, increased alcohol intake, withdrawal and a reinforcement of failures.

Comment: This study was carried out at one of the earlier HWCs. Since this time, the HWC has done a lot to improve the experience of the teams involved, talented or not. Competing in sporting events can not only be a vehicle for social inclusion but heighten an individual's capacity to act in positive ways to improve his or her life. However, this study is a cautionary tale. Careful consideration also needs to be given to those who struggle to win a game, to prevent sport reinforcing how challenging life can be.

Reference: (2013). *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 48(1), 3–19. doi: 10.1177/1012690211428391

STUDY OCCUPATION

Study options for those wishing to explore participation and its relationship with health with AUT, include the Specialist Readings and Special Topic papers, where students work with an academic advisor to pursue an individual learning pathway. Contact Clare Hocking for details.

Qualification: Certificate of Proficiency, Honours degree, Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma in Health Science (Occupational Practice), or a master's degree.

Entry requirements: All health professionals can enrol. Those with a bachelor's degree can enrol direct into the master's. Holders of a diploma or Health Department Certificate initially enrol into the postgrad certificate or diploma.

Contact: clare.hocking@aut.ac.nz