

# SPOTLIGHT ON OCCUPATION

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# AUT



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

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## WELCOME TO THE 23<sup>RD</sup> ISSUE OF SPOTLIGHT ON OCCUPATION

Historically occupational science and therapy theories have tended to reflect a white, western perspective and perpetuate this narrow view of being in the world. In order to be globally relevant, occupation focused practitioners and researchers need to find ways to embrace diverse perspectives. This process is both philosophical and spiritual, and essential to ensuring all people have the right and the means to engage in occupations of their choosing, which contribute to their wellbeing. This edition of SPOTLIGHT coincides with the 2018 WFOT Congress theme, *Connected in diversity: Positioned for impact* and highlights some of the important work occupational scientists and therapists are doing towards a more diverse, enabling and balanced professional lens.

Feel free to hand SPOTLIGHT on to anyone who might be interested in it or contact Deb to be added to the distribution list [deb.webster@aut.ac.nz](mailto:deb.webster@aut.ac.nz). Previous issues are available at <http://www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/study-areas/health-sciences/occupational-science-and-therapy/spotlight-on-occupation-newsletter>

## Occupational Justice as the Freedom to Do and Be: A Conceptual Tool for Advocating for Human Rights

**Authors:** Jenni Mace, Clare Hocking, Marilyn Waring, Liz Townsend, Gail Whiteford, Karen Whalley Hammell, Sandra Galheigo, Beccy Aldrich, Antoine Bailliard and Fasloen Adams

**Summary:** This workshop introduces a new conceptual tool, linking occupational justice concepts to the 'immediately enforceable' Convention for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR; UN, 1978) and the 'progressively realised' Convention for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR; UN, 1978). Interpreted through an occupational lens informed by Amartya Sen's capability theory, the tool links the articles in the conventions to the concepts of dignity and the freedom to do and be. Space and time will be provided to trial the tool and to provide critical commentary on how the tool could be developed.

**Comment:** The WFOT Position Paper: Human Rights (2006) has informed occupational therapists' work with vulnerable populations, but lacks power to hold societies to account. Reported instances of occupational deprivation, alienation, marginalisation and apartheid have shown the suffering endured by people subject to occupational injustices, but failed to identify a foundation from which to demand political and organisational change. This workshop aims to provide an avenue for enhanced access to the international conventions so that they can be used effectively to advocate against barriers to occupational participation.

**Reference:** Workshop presented at the WFOT Congress *Connected in diversity: Positioned for impact*, 22-25 May, 2018, Cape Town, South Africa.

## A Decade On: Working Together to Revise the WFOT Position Paper on Human Rights

**Authors:** Clare Hocking, Liz Townsend & Jenni Mace

**Summary:** This presentation will be a first step towards revising the 2006 *WFOT Position Paper on Human Rights*. Occupational therapists' concern with human rights is grounded in the concept of occupational justice, a concept coined by Drs Ann Wilcock (Australia) and Liz Townsend (Canada). Their work addressed the harms that people endure when they are deprived of occupation, lead lives dominated by certain kinds of occupation (imbalance), if they are marginalised because their occupations are not valued by the mainstream society, or where the things they do lead to feelings of alienation. The Position Paper charges occupational therapists with responsibility to address occupational injustice, but it is overdue for revision.

**Comment:** Since WFOT adopted the position paper, occupational injustices experienced by people who are homeless, refugees and migrants, immigrants, people with disabilities, prisoners and others in institutional care have been documented. The harm caused has also been described. However, little has changed despite the stated connection between the Position Paper and the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In our presentation, we will argue that occupational rights need to be more clearly defined and linked to both human rights documents and theory that helps occupational therapists to judge when situations breach fundamental human rights.

**Reference:** Paper presented at the WFOT Congress *Connected in diversity: Positioned for Impact*, 22-25 May, 2018, Cape Town, South Africa.



## Dance and Hometown Associations are Promising Strategies to Improve Physical Activity Participation among US Nigerian Transnational Immigrants

**Authors:** Ibe-Lamberts, K., Tshiswaka, D. I., Onyenekwu, I., Schwingel, A., & Iwelunmor, J.

**Summary:** This Chicago-based study explored Nigerian transnational immigrants' participation in physical leisure occupations. The 24 participants (13 females & 11 males) were recruited through community centres and hometown associations/ethnic community groups. They were aged 51-60 years, born in Nigeria, and had an average stay of 23 years in the US. The "PEN-3" cultural model was the theoretical framework used for interviewing and data analysis.

The article reports three themes from the findings that are consistent with the model's *Cultural Empowerment* dimension, as *Positive, Existential, and Negative* (p. 256) cultural possibilities: Dancing is part of who we are; Nigerian parties as spaces for dancing; and Hometown associations do not promote physical activity. The following three participant quotes illustrate data from each of the themes, respectively. "I will give 100% to dancing as an activity because Nigerians love to dance and when they are dancing they talk and get to know each other better so this is #1 for us" (female) (p. 256). "If men are there dancing they move so slow as if they're letting the women dance around them. Party's good, but most of the time we (men) use it for drinking and eating" (Male) (p. 257). "We are outside our country we feel we are here mainly to work and take care of our family and our children and make sure that they have a good education and also take care of our parents that are back home" (female) (p. 258). The authors concluded that Nigerian immigrants' physical activity could be promoted by improving access to hometown associations as culturally situated places to dance.

**Comment:** This study's findings are congruent with other research reporting successful outcomes of immigrants' participation in culturally meaningful occupations. The PEN-3 (Person, Extended family, Neighbourhood) model is worth closer inspection by occupational scientists working with immigrants from disparate societies.

**Reference:** (2018). *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 5, 253-260. doi:10.1007/s40615-017-0365-x



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## Special Issue of the Journal of Occupational Science featuring papers from Congress

**Executive Editor:** Clare Hocking

**Summary:** Many presentations and workshops at this year's Congress have an occupational science focus. These span different types of occupation, developmental and educational occupations, occupational justice issues, occupation and identity, and perspectives of occupation beyond a western perspective. To preserve and disseminate this work to a wider audience, the *Journal of Occupational Science* is calling for submissions from this event and more broadly from the African continent for a Special Issue. While all must have an occupational focus, we are open to submissions presenting research findings; demographic trends; theoretical, historical or cross-cultural perspectives; critical perspectives; or systematic reviews of the literature.

**Comment:** As well as reflecting current issues and developments in occupational science, we hope that the WFOT Congress issue of JOS will bring new voices to the occupational science discourse. The intention is to reflect the diverse perspectives on occupation that exist around the world, and to bring forward authors and ideas that strengthen the relevance of occupational science to all occupational therapists. In connecting across diversity, we believe, understandings of occupation can only grow stronger and find application to enhancing the well-being of vulnerable populations everywhere.

**Submit papers to:** <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/rocc>



Journal of Occupational Science

## 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.

**Entry requirements:** All health professionals can enrol. Those with a Bachelor's degree can enrol direct into the Masters. Holders of a Diploma or Health Department Certificate initially enrol into the Postgrad Certificate or Diploma.

**Qualification:** Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma of Health Science (Occupational Practice), or a Master's degree.

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