

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 22ND ISSUE OF SPOTLIGHT ON OCCUPATION

Coinciding with the 2017 Occupational Therapy New Zealand Whakaora Ngangahau Aotearoa conference theme, Committing to Societal Change, this issue of SPOTLIGHT ON OCCUPATION focuses on matters of occupational justice. From the occupational deprivation of asylum seekers, to the exclusion of people with mental health issues and impact of colonialism on Māori, the theme is solidly on occupation as a societal concern. The overall message is that occupational therapists, as holders of specialist knowledge of people's need for and response to meaningful occupation, have a greater role to play. Part of fulfilling that role is assessing occupational needs in ways that do not further marginalise those we seek to help. Hope to see you at conference!

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. 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>

The Structural-Personal Interaction: Occupational Deprivation and Asylum Seekers in Australia

Authors: Emma Crawford, Merrill Turpin, Shoba Nayar, Emily Steel & Jean-Louis Durand

Summary: This grounded theory study explores how Australia's citizenship structures and policies contribute to asylum seekers' occupational deprivation. It is worth noting the robust, multiple ways data were gathered. They included individual interviews with seven asylum seekers and three experienced professionals within relevant services; observations conducted in a detention centre and in community detention settings; a nationally targeted online survey which 34 professionals completed; and a document review of four policy documents which influence detention centre operations and community detention programmes. The researchers describe the data analysis process used to arrive at a substantive theory, the Structural-Personal Interaction (SPI) theory. In essence, this empirically-based theory explains "how social structures of citizenship status and policy contribute to situations that interact with personal characteristics to result in human experiences of engagement in meaningful occupations (or lack thereof)" (p. 334). In other words, occupational deprivation is an interplay of external factors and internal characteristics.

Comment: This article offers an interesting critique of whether occupational deprivation is the consequence of a structural preclusion from participating, a personal experience of being occupationally deprived, or both. More research is needed to validate the SPI theory within other national settings. Yet, it offers useful thinking for service providers to approach occupationally-driven practice with asylum seekers.

Reference: (2016). *Journal of Occupational Science*, 23(3). doi:10.1080/14427591.2016.1153510

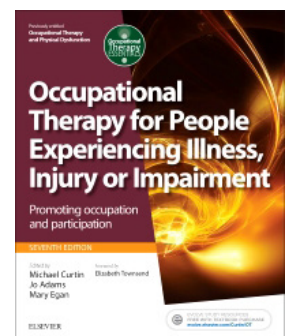
Process of Assessment

Authors: Clare Hocking & Karen Whalley Hammell

Summary: This chapter in a newly published occupational therapy textbook takes a broad view of the assessment process, addressing what is assessed, how it is assessed, when information is gathered and what it is used for. The discussion is innovative, however, in contextualizing assessment within broader considerations including the World Health Organization's shift from an impairment to a participation focus, the profession's shift from function to occupation, and the increasing attention being given to human rights issues.

Comment: Hocking and Hammell take a hard hitting approach to this familiar topic. They point out how everyday practices involving occupational therapists and clients contribute to societal assumptions about people with disabilities, and whether life would be worth living without the capacity to perform basic self-care tasks. It asks us to think about the kind of society we create when receiving help – or preferring to be helped! – score lower than independence; and to think about the message we're giving when we ask people to be assessed using tools created for people living in another time and another place. While helping individuals resolve challenges in daily living remain central, readers of this text will be challenged to reflect on the bigger picture – "what the doing does" in terms of access, discrimination and inequity, as well as what is achieved for individual enablement.

Reference: (2017). In M. Curtin, M. Eagan, & J. Adams (Eds.), *Occupational therapy for people experiencing illness, injury or impairment: Promoting occupation and participation* (7th ed., pp. 171-184). Edinburgh: Elsevier.



Older Men Gardening on the Marae: Everyday Practices for Being Māori

Authors: Pita King, Darrin Hodgetts, Mohi Rua, & Tiniwai Te Whetu

Summary: This study used an indigenous research methodology and ethnographic methods to explore how gardening on a marae (communal facilities used for everyday Māori life) influenced Māori homeless men's reconnection with the everyday occupations of being Māori. The researchers gathered data as they gardened alongside the five Māori homeless men, three marae staff and one staff member from a local homelessness charity. Lefebvre's analysis of space and time was used to analyse and understand everyday life data. The findings illustrated how manaakitanga (care for others), whanaungatanga (relationships based on shared connections), and wairuatanga (spirituality) helped the participants reconnect with Māori ways of being.

Comment: Colonisation and mass land confiscation led to the urbanisation of large numbers of Māori who lost connection to their origins and traditional ways of everyday doing. As a consequence, they were challenged by a loss of identity. The over-representation of Māori in the homeless statistics means they experience additional external scrutiny when carrying out everyday tasks on the street. The opportunity to reconnect with traditional activities on the marae not only helped these participants regain a stronger sense of identity as Māori men, it provided respite, normality, belonging, and flow in the day. This is a robust example of how human engagement in meaningful occupation can contribute to social change.



Photograph taken by Valerie Wright-St Clair

Reference: (2015). Older men gardening on the marae: Everyday practices for being Māori. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 11(1), 14–28.

Citizenship, Community Mental Health and the Common Good

Authors: Kendall Atterbury & Michael Rowe

Summary: This article reviews the development of an evidence based citizenship framework designed by the Program for Recovery and Community Health at Yale University. Using a definition of citizenship that includes the rights, roles, responsibilities, resources and relationships that a society affords someone, the authors review the research that has guided the development of a manualised citizenship program. The program aims to help mental health service users establish valued occupations and roles within the community and includes wrap round peer support, a structured citizenship course with applied activities and a valued role project which involves active participation in a community project. A randomised controlled trial showed those who completed the structured citizenship course had significantly reduced alcohol and drug use, and increased quality of life and satisfaction with work (if employed), compared to those in the standard programme.

Comment: The article starts by examining the notion of the common good. People with mental health issues may be excluded from belonging and participating as a full citizen of their communities, in order for the population to benefit as a whole. The above research has caught the attention of New Zealand forensic health professionals who have recognised that exclusion from citizenship can ultimately lead to people with mental health issues failing to integrate successfully back into the community. Implementation and evaluation of the citizenship project in a New Zealand context is currently underway, so watch this space.

Reference: (2017). Citizenship, community mental health and the common good. *Behavioural Sciences and the Law*. doi: 10.1002/bsl.2293

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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