

## **Effectiveness of a community-based occupational group therapy program for people with mental disabilities**

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**Introduction:** In Japan, we developed an occupational group therapy program based on the Model of Human Occupation that is a conceptual practice model of the occupational therapy. The aim of the program was to assist people with mental disabilities in the community learn collectively about strategies to improve their desired lifestyle.

**Objectives:** To evaluate the effectiveness of this program, we compared the change of the program group of the Occupational Competence, the Occupational Identity, and the Health-related Quality of Life with the control group. Additionally, we considered the characteristics of the occupations that participants in the program group took up in units of the program. The units were selected, because some question items and the subscale of the program group were significantly improved.

**Methods:** Eighteen members with mental disabilities lived in a community made up the program group, and were compared with 23 people of a control group. Subjects assessed themselves with a pre- and post-test using the Occupational Self Assessment version 2.1 (OSA) and SF-36. Then we selected the units "exercises to maintain healthy mind and body," "pleasures," "rest and relaxations," and sorted the occupations the participants took up in these units.

**Results:** The program group significantly improved on some changes in the Occupational Competence, the Occupational Identity and the Occupational Satisfaction Scales of the performance area in OSA. In SF-36, the program group significantly improved on the QOL of Bodily Pain, which seemed stress-related. In the sorts of occupations, for example, the currently favorite physical activities were sorted into "bicycle riding" and "taking a walk." Activities to enjoy were sorted into "watching TV" and "accessing the Internet." Finally, methods of rest and relaxations were sorted into "lie-down" and "drinking coffee or tea." These were usually easily performed, and connected each other.

**Conclusion:** The above results implied that the program group was more satisfied with physical activities and felt more important to grasp and solve problems. Additionally, it seemed that their stress decreased.

**Contribution to the practice base of occupational therapy:** This program supports a recovery process of people with mental disabilities.