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The time use of people with spinal cord injury living in Australia.

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Introduction: Nine thousand people with spinal cord injury (SCI) currently live in Australia. It is estimated that this number will increase to nearly 12,000 by 2021 if current incidence rates continue. Personal, societal, and health care costs of SCI are high, with basic medical and social care estimated at $500 million AUD annually. Improved medical techniques mean immediate survival rates have increased and life expectancy is greater than ever. There is, however, limited information regarding the time use of people with SCI, with the few studies available reporting increased participation in personal care and passive leisure tasks, in place of paid work and active leisure. Information regarding this population's time use is required to inform best rehabilitation practice and attempt to improve outcomes.
Objectives: The objectives of this study are to i) examine how people who have returned to community living following SCI use their time; ii) understand their subjective occupational experience; and iii) determine secondary health conditions that impact on time use.
Method: Respondents completed a semi-structured interview which was transcribed and analysed for emergent themes. They also completed standardised assessments including the *Spinal Cord Injury Secondary Conditions Scale; Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21*; *Functional Independence Measure™*; *Community Integration Questionnaire*; and the *Personal Wellbeing Index*. Each participant also undertook seven days of Experience Sampling Method (ESM) using a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA). SPSS was used to calculate descriptive statistics. Spearman Rho correlations were used to determine any associations between the assessment data and ESM time use data. T-tests for unrelated groups were used for time use data analysis.
Results: ESM, secondary health conditions and mental health outcomes for the first 50 participants will be presented. ESM data will be compared with the Australian Bureau of Statistics' time use data on the general Australian population.
Conclusion: The results of this project are of international significance for occupational therapists in beginning to understand the time use of people with SCI and health conditions that impact on occupational choices. Implications for clinical practice and service planning, as well as the utility of a PDA for ESM data collection, will be discussed.