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Development and validation of Occupational Gaps Questionnaire - an assessment measuring participation in everyday occupations

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Introduction

After various illnesses it is common that people perceive restrictions in everyday occupations. Focus for occupational therapy interventions are on enabling clients to participate in their desired occupations. There is, however, limited knowledge on how persons perceive their restrictions. A reliable and valid instrument focusing on client's participation in occupations would serve as a basis for setting goals in collaboration with the clients and in planning of interventions.

Objectives: To describe the development and validation of Occupational Gaps Questionnaire.

Methods

The Occupational Gaps Questionnaire (OGQ) has recently been developed and assesses presence of occupational gaps in 28 activities, i.e. instrumental ADL, social- leisure- and work/work related activities. Two studies are published on occupational gaps in persons with acquired brain injuries(ABI). An occupational gap is defined as the gap that occurs between what an individual wants and needs to do and what he/she actually does. In order to take into consideration that the occupational gaps might have different challenges the raw score from OGQ are converted into a linear measure using a Rasch measurement model. For further validation of OGQ, data are collected in samples with stroke (n=201), stress-related disorders (n=85), concussion (ongoing) and a Swedish reference sample (n=825). Occupational gaps in the various samples will be measured and the validity, reliability and sensitivity of OGQ will simultaneously be investigated. Results from the Rasch analyses will guide further development of OGQ while the analyses reveal in-depth information about the construction of the tool. Different approaches to the conceptualization of occupational gaps will be evaluated in relation to the empirical data.

Results: Data-analysis is ongoing. The Rasch analysis supported evidence of internal scale validity and sensitivity of the scale and person response validity in the samples with ABI and stress-related disorders.

Conclusion

Preliminary results are promising and psychometric properties of the tool will be presented together with suggested further refinement of OGQ.

Contribution to practice

Further development of OGQ would provide a generic client-centered tool for planning of rehabilitation practices and as measure to detect the outcomes of rehabilitation onto the level of participation in desired occupations.