

OCCUPATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN EPILEPTIC PATIENTS: THE ROLE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

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Introduction: epilepsy is a chronic disorder that changes the lives of epileptic patient in both the physical and psychosocial aspect, interfering directly and negatively on occupational performance.

Objective: to describe and evaluate the effectiveness of a group of Occupational Therapy in improving the occupational performance of epileptic patients. **Methods:** the group was composed of eight members, two men and six women, aged between 34 and 42 years and the sessions were held in the Hospital de Base of São José do Rio Preto, São Paulo, Brazil. The data were collected used two instruments: identification sheet of the participants and Canadian Occupational Performance Measure - COPM. The group aimed to inform and guide about the disease, encourage participants to perform the same professional activities that were before the disease or indicate new professional activities; minimize difficulties of communication and memory and to provide a setting for support and discussion about daily living activities. The non-parametric test of Wilcoxon was used for statistical analysis. **Results:** the COPM showed significant differences in occupational performance of participants when compared to the questionnaire applied before and after the group sessions ($p < 0,0001$). There was improvement in social integration, organization of the routine, memory, difficulties encountered in daily life, beyond the discovery of new professional skills. **Conclusion:** the benefits of this research include an increased awareness of the need to incorporate health promotion strategies when working with clients who have epilepsy and Occupational therapists can help patients with epilepsy to manage their daily activities. **Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy:** the findings indicate that further research involving epilepsy and Occupational Therapy are very important. Occupational therapists may need to spend more time with their clients who have epilepsy because they have an important role in exploring strategies that promote health and minimize difficulties related occupational performance. Hence, occupational therapists are well placed to assist a person with epilepsy to manage the range of social, vocational, home making and recreational occupations that he or she is expected to and wants to engage in.