

## **Collectivism and individualism. Implications for practice based on a qualitative inquiry with Albanians in Switzerland.**

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### **Introduction.**

In Switzerland 22% of the resident population are migrants. Even though scientific literature about health and migration is limited. To increase intercultural competence for health care professionals, it is necessary to deepen the knowledge about cultural aspects - regarding one's own and the culture of migrants. As the socio-cultural background is a factor in the choice of activities better understanding of daily occupations of migrants is required in order to attune to their needs.

### **Objective.**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to increase intercultural knowledge by discovering and interpreting the perceptions of current daily occupations of some male ethnic Albanians living in Switzerland.

### **Method.**

In-depth interviews with eight healthy Muslim Albanian men doing blue collar work were analysed using steps of the constant comparative method followed by an interpretation inspired by hermeneutic principles.

### **Results.**

Three themes were uncovered. "Everything I do I do for my family"; "Where do I belong?" and "Doing something for myself" depict the occupational relation of participants' perceptions. The family-centred view in this group of men regarding their daily occupations pointed to collectivist attitudes and was one of the most striking issues of the findings to consider in intercultural occupational therapy.

### **Discussion.**

Collectivist attitudes and their influence on daily occupations are rarely discussed in occupational therapy/occupational science-literature. But in the discourse on diversity it is criticized that the concept of occupation is strongly connected to individualism, independence and self-determination.

### **Conclusion.**

To offer culturally safe occupational therapy in a client-centred way, the findings of this study give implications for daily practice indicating that in collectivist cultures the family needs to be seen as a strong resource of clients and needs to be taken into account in therapy.

### **Contribution to the practice / evidence base of occupational therapy.**

The transformation of the theoretical differences of collectivism/individualism into daily practice is difficult if one's own and the client's attitudes are not directly comparable. In this presentation ideas will be explored how to implement a more culturally safe and family-centred occupational therapy.