

The Pool Activity Level Instrument for Occupational Profiling

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Introduction

Occupation is key to maintaining physical and mental health and well-being. Cognitive impairment affects the ability to engage in activity but understanding the cognitive demands of an activity and an individual's level of cognitive ability enables the occupational profiling of that person.

Objectives

This 15 minute oral paper presentation will:

- Describe the theoretical basis of the Pool Activity Level (PAL) Instrument for Occupational Profiling
- Demonstrates the reliability and validity of the PAL Checklist with results of a study of its use with people with dementia
- Explores the use of the PAL Instrument in clinical practice and as a reliable research tool
- There will be 5 minutes for discussion and questions

Description

The Pool Activity Level Instrument draws from several models of understanding of human behavior: the Lifespan Approach to human development; the Functional Information Processing Model; the Dialectical Model of a person-centred approach to dementia and, the Model of Human Occupation.

The assessment component of the Instrument: the Pool Activity Level Checklist, has been found to be valid in terms of construct; concurrence and, criterion and as such, provides a robust psychometric underpinning for its widespread use in clinical practice.

Results/Discussion

People with cognitive impairment caused by progressive conditions such as Alzheimer's disease are often omitted from treatment programmes as it is assumed that there will be no clinical improvement. However, when cognitive abilities as well as limitations of an individual are identified and when the demands of an activity are understood, it is possible to support a person to improve in cognition and therefore in function.

Conclusion

The Pool Activity Level Instrument provides Occupational Therapists with a reliable and valid tool for the selection of appropriate, personally meaningful activity.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy

The PAL Instrument is used by Occupational Therapists to develop treatment programmes that aim to probe for an increase in levels of occupational performance. It is also been used by Occupational Therapists to educate professional and family carers to adopt an enabling care approach.