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## **Handicraft - a part of our history or our future?**

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### **Introduction**

Historically, Occupational Therapy has used various kinds of handicrafts as means of treatment. This was reduced in our practice in the 90's due to shorter inpatient stays in hospitals and more attention to patient problems with I-ADL and self care. At the same time emerging theories and models in OT underlined the importance of meaningful occupation to enhance occupational performance and life satisfaction. Within Occupational Therapy, there was a discussion of the meaningfulness of real vs. non-real occupations. I-ADL and self-care were defined as "real" and handicraft as "non-real" occupations and therefore not desirable to maintain. However, tacit knowledge informed us that those handicrafts were still beneficial to patients. At The University Hospital in Uppsala, Sweden we chose to develop and continue to use handicrafts as means in spite of negative attitudes from hospital leaders. Research has added stronger evidence to the concept of occupation and its relation to life satisfaction and health in recent years. Nevertheless, medical care is developing in a technically specialised way which makes it even harder to find support for non-medical treatment in a hospital environment.

### **Objectives**

The aim of this presentation is to show the importance of handicraft as means of Occupational Therapy treatment and our way to promote the use of them.

### **Description/Report**

We describe the practice and development of handicrafts and actions to promote it, such as leadership strategies, external and internal marketing, searching for evidence of the effectiveness of the use of creative activities, and evaluating the use of handicrafts in specific treatment programs. A film, with a description of a case, was produced. Parts of the film will be shown in the presentation.

### **Results/Discussion**

The value of handicraft as means in OT interventions and the possibilities and difficulties in using handicrafts in the future medical care will be discussed.

### **Conclusion**

Handicrafts contribute to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy and can be of value to patients in both long-term and short-term care. Obstacles can be overcome with awareness of possible negative attitudes of the environment and directed actions towards them.