

Occupational therapy, hospitalization and child & youth health care: developing strategies of intervention for a pediatric award

Andréa de Angeli, Sandra Galheigo

University of São Paulo, São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

Introduction: Being ill and hospitalized cause significant disruption in children's & youth's daily life and occupational therapy may contribute to the improvement of their health conditions and quality of life. Nevertheless, circumstances vary greatly in pediatric awards, given that they depend on the characteristics of the illness as much as on the social and economical context where the condition takes place. Occupational therapists should develop strategies to identify and approach the needs of young people under care. Objectives: To present the activities of a project developed in a pediatric award, the theoretical and methodological guidelines and the dynamics of daily practice. To discuss the achievements and the difficulties faced by the occupational therapy project, considering its location in such a medically-centered environment where curing illnesses and injuries are the main concern. Description: The project's four main lines are: Ninar: for children up to two-year-olds and their parents to enhance parents-baby relationship and their care repertoire; Aquarela: for children over two years-old with intense, severe or long-term health conditions demanding highly planned interventions; Amarelinha: intervention at the award's toy-library to promote a less painful and disruptive hospitalization; AdoleSer: for offering adolescents an opportunity for life projects' re-configuration. Discussion: The discussion of session reports reveals a positive impact on the quality of life of children/youth under care. The continuous expansion of strategies and approaches used in the interventions may be noted after two years of implementation of the project. Occupational therapy promotes quality of life of hospitalized young people and helps to build up care networks beyond hospital care. Conclusion Occupational therapy has much to contribute to the improvement of the health condition of hospitalized young people inasmuch as it brings about a different care approach concerned with the maintenance and amelioration of the quality of life of the youths and their families, changing the usual biomedical focus on disease and cure. Contribution to the practice: Producing theoretical and practical knowledge is essential for the development of occupational therapy's role in hospital care in a more comprehensive and critical perspective taking into account the complexity of the conditions involved.