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Fulfilling occupational therapy's full promise of occupation to persons with Parkinson's disease: Integrating time geography strategies into traditional home-based occupational therapy services

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Introduction

Studies have stressed the importance of analyzing time use for populations such as teen mothers, mothers with children with disabilities, older adults, persons with spinal cord injury, fibromyalgia, cancer, Parkinson's disease, and psychiatric diagnoses (DeLany, & Jones, M., in press; Eklund, Leufstadius, & Bejerholm, 2009; Fricke & Unsworth, 2001; La Cour, Nordell, Josephsson, in press; Liedberg, Hesselstrand, & Henriksson, 2004; McNulty, Andrews, Urry, & Olsen, 2008; McNulty, Crowe, Kroening, VanLeit & Good, in press). These authors have argued that time use and activity engagement patterns should be used in occupational therapy practice as a way to facilitate clients' maximum participation. In this grant-funded study the author is taking the next step in occupational therapy's development of time use knowledge and applying these concepts in a small pilot intervention study for community-living persons with Parkinson's disease.

Objectives

Through the use of multiple qualitative and quantitative data sources, the two objectives of this study are to:

1. determine client perspectives of a time geography intervention (i.e., includes data about activity, time, persons present, physical environment and perceptions of mental/physical feeling states) with persons with Parkinson's Disease and
2. describe how this time geography intervention best integrates into usual care (e.g., instruction in compensatory strategies, environmental modification, etc.) with this population.

Methods

A convenience sample of five persons with Parkinson's disease will receive five home occupational therapy visits that will include traditional occupational therapy services in addition to a time geography intervention. Pre- and post interviews will provide client perspectives regarding time geography patterns before and after the intervention. Two occupational therapists administering the services will communicate before and after each visit to debrief which parts of intervention should be replicated in a larger future study. In addition, the home visits will be videotaped.

Conclusion and Contribution to the field

A core belief in the philosophy of occupational therapy is that through engagement in occupation, a person can affect his or her health and well-being. The results of this study will provide evidence of another way of integrating this philosophy into practice through the use of a time geography intervention.