

## **"Water Is Life" - The Occupational Injustice of Performing Survival Tasks in Rural South Africa**

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South Africa is a water-scarce country, with consistent access to potable water becoming increasingly difficult with changing climates. Since the first democratic elections in 1994, the South African government has developed a legislative framework to expedite the rollout of water-supply infrastructure. Progress has been made in attaining the goal of having access to potable water within 200 metres of all households. Significant challenges remain, however, particularly in rural areas, with the result that household members spend large proportions of their time on the daily collection of water from community sources.

The study formed part of a broader Doctoral project and aimed to investigate bADL and iADL tasks typically performed in a rural community in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. An instrument development study design was carried out. This paper focuses on the results of Phase 1 of the study, with data collected during discussion groups and home visits. This paper focuses on the nature, form and occupational performance implications of water collection in a rural context.

The results showed that none of the study participants had piped municipal water in their homes and that they all spent a significant proportion of their time fetching water from communal taps in the adjacent streets, communal village water tanks or nearby rivers on a daily basis. The daily collection of water for survival thus precludes many rural women from participation in other occupations, such as employment and education, resulting in occupational injustice.