

"Dialysis Completely Controls Your Life"¹: The Occupational Performance and Participation of Chronic Haemodialysis Receivers in South Africa

Mia Vermaak¹, Mariëtte Nel², Mienca Botha³, Annamarie Conradie³, Martinette Van Loggerenberg³, Lorindi Vermaak³, Emma Webb³, Jenna Wrench³

¹*Department of Occupational Therapy, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa,* ²*Department of Biostatistics, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa,* ³*Undergraduate student at the time of the study: Department of Occupational therapy, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa*

Introduction: Chronic kidney disease is an escalating health problem, resulting in more people needing haemodialysis as renal replacement therapy. Patients receiving chronic haemodialysis experience many challenges, requiring much adaptation, in order to support their general health and remain compliant with the dialysis protocol. In contrast with other countries, in South Africa, occupational therapy is not present in the renal unit. This study aimed to explore the challenges posed to receivers of chronic haemodialysis, from an occupational point of view, by describing their occupational performance and participation.

Method: A quantitative, cross sectional study design was used to describe the occupational performance and participation of 99 chronic haemodialysis receivers in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Convenience sampling was used, with data collected by means of a questionnaire.

Results: Results show a tendency of decreased occupational performance specifically on the days of receiving dialysis. Statistical significant differences were found in the performance of activities such as work, leisure, mobility, sexual activities, household maintenance and social participation - before commencement of chronic dialysis and on the days of receiving dialysis. The majority of participants reported feeling in control of their own life; although they were also able to identify activities that they are not partaking in, despite wanting to do so.

Conclusion: The dominating routine and the distinctive challenges posed by haemodialysis have an effect on the occupational performance and participation of its receivers, and against this background recommendations are made for occupational therapists exploring their role in South African renal care.

(¹Verbatim quote from a study participant)