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The conflicted practice; municipal occupational therapists' experiences with assessment of clients with cognitive impairments

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Background: The practice of Norwegian OTs in the context of municipal care is a little explored area and due to recent governmental documents emphasizing that OTs are important contributors in services, the aim of this study was to explore municipal OTs experiences working with assessment of clients with cognitive impairments.

Method: Fourteen individual interviews were conducted with OTs who work with clients with cognitive impairments.

Results: The results revealed three topics; 'Activity is what's important in people's daily lives', 'It is a lot of clutter on the side' and 'We could have contributed more if someone had known what we can do'.

Conclusion: This study illustrates a conflicted practice related to the choices the OTs make in their daily practice. They value the importance of working occupation based, but when it comes to the assessment process they choose to keep using the impairment based screening tools, although they are very critical to what the results can be used for. They feel the need to engage in professional development, but due to heavy daily workloads this is difficult. As several governmental documents emphasizing the importance of OT, they are however positive regarding the future of OT in municipal services in Norway.