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Adult day services: their impact on people dementia and their primary carers

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People with dementia have reduced opportunities for occupational participation. This affects their health and wellbeing and that of the carers with whom they live. Adult day services were identified as possibly providing opportunities for meaningful occupation. However, there is a paucity of research on the occupational participation needs of people with dementia who use adult day services and their carers.

Objectives: This study explores these needs of this subset while attending adult day services and in their home environments. The impact of attendance on the occupational participation of their primary carers was also explored.

Method: Qualitative research methods were used to elicit perceptions and experiences of a purposive sample of 15 people with dementia and their primary carers (15) who accessed adult day services. Semi-structured joint and individual interviews, modelled on the theoretical framework of the Model of Human Occupation, were conducted with each of the 30 participants. An observation schedule collected data on participants while attending the adult day services and a program audit of each adult day services was conducted. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. The researcher maintained field notes and an audit trail of procedures throughout. Analysis of data proceeded through an iterative approach that distilled data into themes. Research commenced upon approval by the Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Practice Implications: Findings will inform community-based services for people with dementia and their primary carers.