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Occupational therapy in the contexts of a natural disaster: A scoping review

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Introduction/Rationale: Disasters influence the participation of people in meaningful occupations. Occupational therapists (OTs) have knowledge to help survivors, their families, and first responders return to their lives after a disaster. OTs can be involved in all stages of preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a natural disaster at local and national levels. However, it is unknown what, when, and how OTs have helped survivors, their families and first responders during natural disasters.

Objectives: To identify and inform OTs' roles and experiences in a natural disaster.

Method: A scoping review will be conducted via five steps suggested by Arksey and O'Malley (2005): 1) identify the research question, 2) identify the relevant studies published between 2000 to 2014 in English 3) select studies based on inclusion and exclusion criteria by two reviewers, 4) chart the data, and 5) collate, summarize, and report the results from the selected studies. The considerations to the use of this methodology suggested by Levac, Colquhoun and O'Brien (2010) were pondered. The results will be presented using the descriptive numerical and thematic analyses.

Practice Implication: The results of this scoping review will help OTs recognize the need for their assistance at individual, community, and national levels and provide them with the basic understanding about OTs' roles across the spectrum of disaster. It could also contribute to the development of OT services offered to survivors, their families and first responders in natural disaster.

Conclusion: The potential OT's roles in the context of a natural disaster will be identified via the scoping review.