

Examining the Experience of Social and Occupational Participation Among Persons with Physical Disabilities: Building a Model of Occupational Deprivation and Stress

Andreja Bartolac, Claire Sangster Jokić
University of Applied Health Sciences, Zagreb, Croatia

Introduction: Social participation (SP) is a means of supporting desired engagement in community and family activities (Gillen & Boyt Schell, 2014), while occupational participation (OP) includes engagement in activities that have perceived purpose and meaning (Fristedt et al, 2011)². Arguably, social exclusion and occupational deprivation represent sources of stress and consequently negative health outcomes.

Objectives: To date, there has been little research examining SP and OP among persons with physical disabilities and the ways in which these relate to the stress experience. Using models of stress and social exclusion, this study aimed to explore perceived sources of stress within a framework of occupational and social deprivation.

Method: Focus group interviews were conducted with 15 adults with physical disabilities. Transcribed interviews were analyzed inductively using a constant comparative approach.

Results/Conclusion: Participants described various factors related to social exclusion (e.g. discrimination and prejudice) and occupational deprivation (e.g. inaccessibility, exclusionary institutional structures) as sources of stress. A model of occupational deprivation and stress is proposed with the aim to further understand OP among persons with physical disabilities.