

Economic evaluations of occupational therapy for people with cognitive and/or functional decline: A systematic review

Miia Rahja^{1,4}, Kate Laver^{1,4}, Tracy Comans^{2,4}, Lindy Clemson^{3,4}, Maria Crotty^{1,4}
¹*Flinders University, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia,* ²*Menzies Health Institute Queensland, Griffith University, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia,* ³*University of Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia,* ⁴*Cognitive Decline Partnership Centre, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia*

Rationale: With the ageing of the world's population comes significant implications for nearly all sectors of society, including health and aged care spending. Health and aged care systems need to respond to the increasing need for services for older people. While studies have evaluated the effectiveness of occupational therapy for older people, little is known about the cost effectiveness of these interventions.

Objectives: To identify the costs and outcomes of occupational therapy for people with cognitive and/or functional decline.

Approach: A systematic review of studies that evaluated occupational therapy services for people experiencing cognitive and/or functional decline and costs related to accessing such services were calculated. Full economic evaluations, partial economic evaluations, randomized trials reporting estimates of resource use or costs associated with [intervention(s) and comparator(s)] and studies with pre- and post-intervention cost comparators were included.

Results: Thirteen studies met the inclusion criteria. The type and duration of occupational therapy intervention in these studies varied. Results suggested that structured multicomponent occupational therapy interventions which engaged caregivers and programs that improved the home environment to prevent falls delivered better functional and economic outcomes. The economic benefits were prominent for supporting people with dementia and their caregivers, the caregivers of people with Parkinson's disease, and for community dwelling people aged 60 and over.

Conclusion: Only a few studies have evaluated the economic impact of occupational therapy for people experiencing age related cognitive or functional decline. Future occupational therapy intervention studies should include a cost evaluation of the service and its delivery.