Cognitive Orientation to daily Occupational Performance Approach - a promising approach to achieve personal goals and enhance executive functions in young persons with Spina Bifida or Cerebral Palsy

Lena Bergqvist¹, Ann-Marie Öhrvall², Caisa Hofgren¹, Marie Peny-Dahlstrand¹
¹University of Gothenburg, Institute of Neuroscience and Physiology, Department of Health and Rehabilitation, Gothenburg, Sweden, ²Karolinska Institutet, Department of Neurobiology, Care Sciences and Society, Division of Occupational Therapy, Stockholm, Sweden

Introduction: Occupational performance requires both motor and executive functions. Research shows that persons with spina bifida (SB) or cerebral palsy (CP) have restriction due both motor- and executive dysfunctions when performing occupations. The Cognitive Orientation to daily Occupational Performance Approach (CO-OP Approach™) is a performance-based and problem-solving approach enabling individuals to identify their own cognitive strategies to improve skill acquisition, through guidance from the therapist.

Objectives: To investigate if the CO-OP Approach™ is beneficial and feasible for young adults with SB or CP, in a Swedish context.

Method: An exploratory multiple case study with an embedded design. Ten persons (16-28 year) participated in 10 intervention sessions with the CO-OP Approach™: 5 with CP (MACS I-II) and 5 with SB. Data was triangulated from the participants’, the therapists- and the organizational perspective. Evaluations were carried out on baseline, direct after and six month after the treatment with outcomes on all ICF-levels. Some of the participants’ experiences were captured with structured questions.

Results: Preliminary results showed that self-rated goal attainment and executive functions improved, and that satisfaction was very high with the CO-OP Approach™ as the participants found the approach meaningful and worth the effort. The CO-OP Approach™ was compatible with core values in the Habilitation services in Sweden. The proportion of participants that expressed that they used meta-cognitive strategies when performing occupations was high and evolved over time.

Conclusion: The CO-OP Approach™ is a promising approach to achieve personal goals and enhance executive functions in young persons with SB or CP.