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## Occupational performance and life satisfaction of spouses of men with spinal cord injury

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**Introduction:** Spinal cord injury (SCI) usually causes severe disability.

Approximately 40% of SCI patients need some level of assistance, often provided by family members; in the case of male patients, assistance is usually provided by their spouses. Spouses of SCI males often report symptoms of depression, anxiety, low levels of wellbeing, and health problems.

**Objectives:** Compare the occupational performance and life satisfaction of female spouses of SCI males with those of healthy males, and assess whether the SCI male's level of functioning, the mental health of the spouse, and her social support predict her occupational performance.

**Methods:** Thirty women participated in the study: 15 spouses of SCI males who underwent rehabilitation at Loewenstein Rehabilitation Hospital in Israel, and 15 spouses of healthy males. Study measures included (a) the Occupational Performance History Interview (OPHI-II), (b) the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), (c) the Spinal Cord Independence Measure (SCIM) III scale, (d) the Short Form Health Survey Questionnaire (SF-36), and (e) the MOS Social Support Survey.

**Results:** Occupational performance and life satisfaction of spouses of SCI males were lower than those of spouses of healthy males. Mental health and belonging to the experimental or the control group were identified as the main predictors of occupational performance of the spouses.

**Conclusions:** It is recommended that occupational therapists would focus not only on the SCI patients, but also on the healthy spouses in the purpose of promoting their occupational performance, improving their time management, and thus enable good health and well-being.