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SERVICE GAPS IDENTIFIED BY PEOPLE CARING FOR THOSE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS**Tina Shaw¹, Primrose Lentin¹, Sean Hegarty², Emma Ladd²**¹Monash University, Victoria, Australia ²Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria, Victoria, Australia

Rationale: The social, emotional and physical demands of caring for a person with mental illness impact carers' occupational choice, personal identity, health, and wellbeing. Government policy recommends supporting carers to better support consumers. Understanding carers' needs is essential for adequate provision of services and advocacy.

Objectives: The research aim was to explore what carers need to: Improve their health and wellbeing; Assist with their caring role; and Identify gaps in services and funding. The findings will guide service planning for one Victorian non-government organisation.

Methods: The mixed methods research used purposive sampling. Data were gathered through questionnaire, four focus groups, nine telephone interviews, and written feedback. Inductive thematic analysis was used to analyse data and member checking confirmed themes.

Results: Thirty carers contributed to the research. Between them, they cared for thirty-eight consumers over periods of time that varied from one to over forty years. Service gaps identified were grouped into two main themes: *Improvements to the healthcare system*; and *Direct carer support*. Major needs identified include: An integrated healthcare system providing smooth transition between services; Personalised continued service provision for consumers; and Comprehensive health support for carers. Findings were similar across both South Metropolitan and Gippsland regions. A higher frequency of issues with isolation, transport, and quantity of localised services were reported in Gippsland.

Conclusion: Closing the identified gaps would enable carers to better care for consumers and themselves. This research shows that service gaps exist, and provides insight into how best carer support can be achieved.

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS' EXPERIENCE OF A COMMUNITY STREET SOCCER PROGRAM: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY**Brigitte Lupton, Carole James, Samantha Ashby, Kirsti Haracz***University of Newcastle, Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia*

Introduction/Rationale: Literature depicts sport as a therapeutic medium that can improve the quality of life of consumers with a mental illness. Despite this, participation rates in sport among this population are low and there is a lack of research representing the participation experience from the consumer perspective. Understanding the personal meaning of the consumers' participation allows occupational therapists to tailor recovery-oriented interventions.

Objectives: This study seeks to explore the perspectives of people with severe mental illness regarding their engagement in a 'street soccer' program, and the facilitators and barriers of ongoing engagement.

Method: Constructivist grounded theory methodology is used for this research. Semi structured interviews were conducted with 15 participants during their admission to a non-acute psychiatric inpatient unit, and a further two interviews conducted post discharge. Interviews were transcribed and analysed using constant comparison technique with the assistance of the Nvivo10 qualitative software analysis program.

Findings: Participants described their experiences of the 'street soccer' program in relation to their mental health recovery. Several themes emerged from the data, with a central theme focusing on the social benefits and demands of participating in the program. Participants' experience of social connection, or disconnection while engaged in street soccer shapes their personal meaning of participation and impacts on future attendance.

Conclusion: Understanding the consumer perspective of the social benefits and demands involved with 'street soccer' participation will inform the occupational therapy role in overcoming barriers and facilitating positive social connectedness through sport programs for this population.

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OCCUPATIONAL SHIFTS AND VALUING CARER PEER SUPPORT**Cate Bourke¹, Becca Allchin¹, Sanders Bronwyn¹, Primrose Lentin², Shannon Lang¹**¹Eastern Health, Box Hill, Australia ²Monash University, Frankston, Australia

Introduction: Current policy frameworks call for the participation of consumers and carers in all levels of mental health service delivery. Such inclusion leads to better outcomes for all, however it is recognised that carers have needs and occupations beyond their carer role.

Objective: To describe an innovative carer peer support program developed by a group of occupational therapists. The program addresses occupational shifts and validates the lived experience of carers.

Approach: This paper examines the rationale, phases of development and evaluation results of a carer peer support model in a clinical mental health service. It will also describe the role that occupational therapists played in developing and sustaining the model - and how issues such as role boundaries, risk and partnership practices were addressed.

Results: Evaluation of the model indicates that it is well regarded within the mental health service system and that it equips carers to carry out their caring occupation, as well as helping carers recognise the need for occupations beyond caring. The findings highlight that employing carers as paid workers values their 'real life' experience in their caring occupation. Findings also illustrate the skill set and competency standards of occupation therapists are well suited in enabling this emerging body of work.

Conclusion: Although this model has been developed in a clinical mental health setting, the key principles and learnings could be applied with carers or consumers across a variety of settings in which occupational therapists are employed.

PARTICIPATION OF OLDER ADULTS

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY TO THE WORK-TO-RETIREMENT TRANSITION PROCESS IN AUSTRALIA: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**Jackie Eagers¹, Richard Franklin¹, Kieran Broome², Matthew Yau¹**¹James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland, Australia ²University of the Sunshine Coast, Maroochydore, Queensland, Australia

Introduction: Retirement from work is a significant life event in Australia. With the baby boomer population entering retirement, an ageing population and the diversity in the work-to-retirement process, there is a need to better understand this occupational transition. Enabling active ageing within the retirement process will become increasingly important, as choices need to be made to facilitate changes in lifestyle post work.

Aim: This review aimed to identify occupational therapy's contribution to the work-to-retirement transition process in Australia.

Methods: A literature review was undertaken through database searches in August 2014. Inclusion criteria included peer reviewed studies on the contribution of occupational therapy to the work-to-retirement transition process in Australia published in the past 20 years. Thematic analysis was conducted to determine the relationship of study findings to an occupational perspective and the role of occupational therapists in clinical practice. The McMaster critical appraisal tools were utilised to determine methodological quality.

Results: Eight qualitative studies meeting the inclusion criteria were identified. No articles on current occupational therapy clinical practice were found. Preliminary themes identified include: occupational identity, occupational roles and occupational adaptation related to the occupational perspective; and retirement planning and implementation related to the potential occupational therapy role. Preliminary critical analysis findings include generalisability and data saturation limitations.

Conclusion: Occupational therapy's focus on occupation can assist in understanding the work-to-retirement transition process experience. Occupational therapy is well placed to establish a clinical role in facilitating the retirement transition to support a healthy ageing population.