

Occupation considered valuable for healthy elderly Japanese people

Norikazu KOBAYASHI, Takashi YAMADA, Hironori KAWAMATA, Yu ISHIBASHI
Tokyo Metropolitan University, Tokyo, Japan

Introduction: Discovering and acknowledging value in one's occupations is important for a sense of well-being (Kielhofner, 1985). Based on this assumption, we organize a health promotion program for elderly people comprising a total of fifteen sessions consisting of lectures and exercises based on the MOHO. We are reporting here the occupation that the participants cited as valuable.

Objectives: The purpose of study was to clarify the features of the occupation that the participants cited as valuable.

Methods: The data for this report was obtained from the session workbook with the theme "value." To complete the workbook, the participants listed five activities that were very important or valuable from those they had experienced in the past several weeks. Then, using the scale of 0 points for not relevant, 1 point for relevant, and 2 points for very relevant, participants evaluated the value aspects of each activity as follows: temporal orientation (3 items: past, present, and future), meaning (5 items including personal awareness, personal satisfaction, etc.), and standard of performance (3 items including utilization of ability). We conducted a similar survey with twenty freshman students at our university to collect comparison data.

Results: The activities cited as valuable by the participants totaled 65 (13 people x 5 activities). The most popular activities were those conducted with friends, including eating meals, traveling, viewing a play, group activities, etc. (total of 27 activities) followed by health-oriented activities like taking a walk, exercising, and listening to lectures on health (total of 9 activities). Compared to college students, elderly people had more than one criteria for value (e.g. present, future, and personal satisfaction). When we compared the average value for 11 items, healthy elderly people reported higher evaluations on all items compared to college students. A significant difference ($p < 0.05$) was found for nine out of eleven items. In particular, the differences were greatest for past, future, and recognition for accomplishment.

Conclusion: Healthy elderly people found different kinds of values in daily occupation. Thus, we obtained an important perspective on preparing occupation therapy intervention programs aiming to promote the health of elderly people.