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## **Towards a culture-specific theory applicable within occupational therapy in Sweden/Scandinavia**

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### **Introduction**

Different models/theories about the relationship between human occupation and health, a core assumption in occupational therapy, have been adopted in Sweden. However, no theory of the relationship between occupation and health, grounded in a Swedish or Scandinavian context, has so far been presented. The existing models /theories are mainly based on theoretical assumptions originated from the USA and Canada. Although the USA, Canada and Sweden all are included in a western culture, there may be differences between the countries. These differences may influence the view of occupation, health and the relationships between the concepts. A clarification and better understanding of the core concept occupation could also contribute to increase the performance of empirical studies which is an urgent need within the area.

### **Objectives**

The aim of this project is to develop a theory, based on Swedish empirical grounds, concerning the dimensions of occupation and its relation to health.

### **Methods**

Grounded Theory is used as a key method in this project including a series of empirical studies.

### **Conclusion**

The process towards a Swedish/Scandinavian theory applicable within occupational therapy is ongoing. A first core category has been presented: "The what, why and how of occupation". The following studies have been performed and completed: 1) A literature review of the meaning of Swedish terms compatible with occupation, activity, doing and task; 2) A study among novice occupational therapy students in Sweden; 3) A follow up study among occupational therapy students in Sweden. A fourth study, a Delphi-study among Swedish experts concerning the concept of occupation is in manuscript. For the time being, the following studies are planned: 1) qualitative interviews among occupational therapists in Sweden and, 2) a survey-study among occupational therapist in Sweden/Scandinavia.

### **Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy**

A cultural-specific theory will contribute to the process of professionalization for occupational therapists in Sweden. A clarification of the terms occupation and its relationship to health may also facilitate and thereby enhance performance of empirical studies which are an urgent need in occupational therapy.