

Occupations as ends: Time-use and self-reported bodily symptoms for people with and without disabilities in Hong Kong

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Introduction: Time use study measure how people allocate their time to daily activities is consistent with the model of occupational performance. This presentation highlights two related studies that have been conducted for people with and without disabilities.

Objectives: (1) To examine patterns of time use and self-perceived musculoskeletal symptoms for women homemakers in Hong Kong using a cross-sectional survey. (2) To examine the time-use patterns of people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and their pulmonary functions in Hong Kong.

Methods: (1) A total of 216 women were selected from a women's center and a selected district by trained volunteers for a single interview using convenience sampling. (2) A total of 63 participants with COPD recruited in the community. Both studies included a surveillance of self-reported symptoms for the past 12 months and a time use log to report respondents' daily activities retrospectively during a 24-hour reference day.

Results: In study (1), significant differences were found in the mean hours spent in paid work, outdoor activities, and passive leisure between respondents with paid and those with unpaid work ($p = 0.000 - 0.021$). Homemakers were more likely to report discomfort in their upper back (OR = 2.70) and shoulder (OR = 3.50) while shopping; in their lower back (OR = 1.90), wrist (OR = 2.02), and hip (OR = 2.35) while washing utensils; and in their finger (OR = 1.45) and knee (OR = 1.84) during cleaning tasks. In study (2), significant correlation was found between hours of sleep or rest and scores of fatigue and emotional dimensions as charted by the Chronic Respiratory Disease Questionnaire ($p < 0.01$).

Conclusion: (1) Modifying current participation in household chores like cleaning, washing utensils, and shopping is needed to reduce the risk of developing musculoskeletal problems among women homemakers. (2) Sleep and rest is an important factor for reducing fatigue and controlling emotion in people with COPD.

Contribution to the practice/ evidence base of occupational therapy: Studies of occupations in people with or without disabilities should consider measuring time-use.