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OCCUPATION AND HEALTH

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Understanding and making visible the actions, activities or tasks that have a purpose or meaning in people's lives is one of the objectives of occupational therapy. This discipline also seeks to demonstrate which occupations actually cause a repairing effect, which increase motivation and which strengthen the immune system. The existing relationship between occupation and well-being is one of the aspects that help understanding human occupation. Case studies that allow expanding and consolidating the therapeutic evidence are also intended.

In 1994, Christiansen (1) talked about understanding the concept of occupation and differentiating it from the concept of activity. So, he defined occupation "as the group of activities that are identified, organized and valued by a group of people and a culture". (1, p5)

To make known the existence and effectiveness of the results achieved through occupational therapy is a pressing need; in addition, the person who suffers a health condition and his family should know about the options that complement and lead to improve and increase functionality, because we are faced with chronic health conditions, permanent pain or states that have an impact on a satisfactory evolution.

Therefore, having states of well-being and moments of tranquility or being able to focus attention on something other than pain is what makes a difference between one patient and another. Each person is unique and has a history, beliefs, needs and individual and specific tastes that create a unique life. Only in the presence of an adverse event or situation that alters health, people look at the past and think about the future, although they are living in the present, here and now. In those moments, people really cherish what they have, what they do and what they are.

As an occupational therapist with experience in the clinical area, it is satisfying to find

published cases that allow us to understand and reveal what a profession can do for the physical, mental and emotional health of a human being. There are studies on aging that show that occupational therapy not only improves the quality of life of older adults, but also improves health economy by reducing costs, because people get sick less when they are engaged in something they like. (2) On the other hand, it is not necessary to establish causal relationships between occupation, health and well-being; however, there are strong relationships between these concepts, so it can be said that healthy people engage in several occupations. (3)

Therefore, the challenge for health professionals in the 21st century is to be able to conduct studies based on health economics and effectiveness in terms of expected results, studies in which occupational therapy can demonstrate that therapeutic activities work in all dimensions of a person, ranging from the physical, emotional and mental aspects, through the family dimension to achieve a social impact. Therefore, the perception of a person's well-being can have greater and better times.

As a professional duty and from an ethical point of view, I consider that it is necessary to be able to commit to investigations on how occupations and activities contribute to people's health, as well as to show the main and most effective therapeutic alternatives that aim to satisfy the essential needs of human beings suffering from health conditions, doing a reflection in order to achieve a better quality of life. Thus, each case we have is an investigation: the methodology chosen, its rigor, the formality in data recording and the veracity of the instruments chosen support the results or indicators of change in the people who receive a treatment.

Finally, I call on more occupational therapists to write down their daily experiences

and share the importance of occupation in overall health and well-being.

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