

## Spring 2011 Research

**Title:** Authenticating an Assessment for Mothers of Children with Autism: The AMCA

**Researchers:** Elizabeth B. Lewis, OTS, William J. Rider, OTS, and Robin A. Ujcic-Snyder, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Grace S. Fisher

**Reader:** Dr. Ellen McLaughlin

**Abstract:**

Bower, Holbrook, Mattioli, Worman, Mack, and Fisher (2010) developed a grounded theory, the Contextual Model of Coping and Acceptance (CMCA), which described the challenges and rewards experienced by mothers of children with ASD. Our investigation utilized the CMCA as a theory base for the design and validation of an assessment of life satisfaction and occupational performance for mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The instrument we developed is the Assessment for Mothers of Children with Autism (AMCA). Therapists working with children with ASD may utilize the AMCA to become more aware of situational challenges faced by the mothers and to help the mothers and their families identify needed support and resources.

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**Title:** Lived Experiences of Fathers who have Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

**Researchers:** Lata Ananthan, OTS, Sarah Bowlby Darling, OTS, Breia Szagola, OTS, Jennifer Youtsey Clarkson, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Grace Fisher

**Reader:** Dr. Ellen McLaughlin

**Abstract:**

We conducted a qualitative descriptive study to determine the lived experiences of fathers of children with autism. This study sought to determine how having a child with autism affects a father's quality of life and occupational balance. Researchers analyzed what additional supports the fathers might need to help improve their quality of life and occupational balance. Eight fathers of children with autism were interviewed using a 12 point questionnaire. Results indicated that despite reports of increased stress, anxiety, self-limiting professional growth, and troubled relationships; fathers were satisfied with their occupational balance and quality of life. It was found that fathers would benefit from additional supports including that of therapists, family, friends, teachers, and other health care professionals.

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**Title:** A Systematic Review of Intervention Strategies Used with Children with Feeding Difficulties

**Researchers:** Alicia Canavan, OTS, Kathleen Kane, OTS, and Jesse Karger, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Lalit J. Shah

**Reader:** Dr. Amy F. Gerney

**Abstract:**

Occupational therapists play a key role in treating children with feeding difficulties. Eating meals is a necessary area of occupation that is essential to providing nutrition and increasing energy in order for a child to function during the day. Although feeding problems are widely recognized in children with disabilities, the efficacy of intervention strategies used do not have high level evidence based research supporting them. The purpose of this study was to: (i) conduct an evidence based practice review of studies published at least over the last twenty years on the effectiveness of feeding intervention strategies with children who had feeding difficulties; (ii) to list specific feeding interventions used for specific problems based on the available evidence; (iii) to critically appraise articles and assign levels of evidence based on the S.I.G.N. scale; and (iv) develop matrices that would be useful for occupational therapy practitioners. For occupational therapists working with children with disabilities who are experiencing feeding difficulties, this review will provide references for evidence based feeding interventions. The review of these studies may assist clinicians in developing intervention plans for pediatric clients with feeding difficulties.

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**Title:** Occupational Therapy Group Intervention Strategies for Clients with a Diagnosis of Schizophrenia: An Evidence-Based Review

**Researchers:** Lorrel Lancaster, OTS, Erin Rossik, OTS, Lauren Zack, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Gwen Bartolacci

**Reader:** Dr. Amy Gerney

**Abstract:**

**Objective-** The purpose of this study was to conduct a critical appraisal of the literature to identify the effectiveness of occupational therapy intervention strategies on improving independent living skills for clients with a diagnosis of schizophrenia.

**Method-** The authors completed a comprehensive search of the literature, selected research studies and critically appraised each study using critical review forms developed by Law, Stewart, Pollock, Letts, Bosch, & Westmoreland (McMaster University, 1998).

**Results-** Five level III studies were critically appraised and analyzed for this study. Each study had several limitations and methodological flaws.

**Conclusions-** Occupational therapy intervention strategies are widely used with clients in psychiatric settings. However, due to a significant lack of available research, it is clear that there is a need for evidence based studies related to the effectiveness of group intervention strategies with clients with schizophrenia.

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**Title:** Parental Perceived Benefits and Limitations of Intervention Services for Children with Autism and Learned Strategies in Support of Individual Goal Achievement.

**Researchers:** Lori Silvanage-Charney, OTR/L; Kristin Karr, OTS; Jacqueline Kendona, OTS;

Brigid Lyman, OTR/L; Rachel Pirouz, OTS;

**Research Committee Chair:** Thomas Swartwood, MS OTR/L

**Reader:** Dr. Charles A. LaJeunesse, PhD

**Abstract:**

**Objective-** Considering the pervasiveness of the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder and the many challenges that the child and family face, the purpose of this study was to examine the lived experience of a group of mothers of children with Autism and understand the participants' goals, aspirations and the perceived benefits and limitations of the services received.

**Methods-** Six semi-structured interviews were conducted using a phenomenological method of interactive dialogue and exchange. Transcripts were reviewed using Giorgi's data analysis strategies. Participants raw data was transformed to meaning units. Triangulation was employed to enhance credibility of data analysis.

**Results-** Through analysis of the transcripts, four major themes emerged. The major themes included the mother's advocacy for the care that her child receives, the need for the parent to have an effective form of communication with their child, parental hope for their child's future and the importance of having patience and perseverance when the child is attempting to learn a new skill.

**Conclusion-** The participants interviewed in this study offered important information regarding their personal goals for their children diagnosed with Autism, their perceived benefits, and limitations of therapeutic services and they shared strategies they have found most helpful for raising a child on the spectrum.

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**Title:** Comparison of a Hybrid Speech Input System and a Speech Recognition System on the Speed and Accuracy of Text Generation

**Researchers:** Dominick DePrete, OTS, Kristi McCluskey, OTS, Alysa Scavone, OTS, and Megan Vascellaro, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Denis Anson, MS, OTR/L

**Reader:** Dr. Joseph Cipriani

**Abstract:**

While there are features that make electronic communication fast and convenient for able body people, these can act as barriers for individuals with disabilities. Dragon Naturally Speaking 10.0 is one software program that acts as a facilitator for text generation for individuals who cannot use the keyboard. The purpose of this research project was to determine whether the speed and accuracy of a hybrid text entry (speech and mouse emulation) system is greater than speech input alone. The study used a quasi-experimental A-B comparison design. The control group of subjects used standard speech recognition to replicate a complex word processing document, while the experimental group used a hybrid system combining speech recognition, head-controlled mouse, and on-screen keyboard to produce the

same documents. Results showed that hybrid speech input provides significant speed advantages over speech alone. These results may lead therapists to recommend more effective access methods for people with disabilities.

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**Title:** Video Games: Motivations for Playing

**Researchers:** Jessi Burgess, OTS, Russel Heerkens, OTS, Erin Kramer, OTS, and Monica Winshel, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Ellen McLaughlin

**Reader:** Dawn Evans, MS, OTR/L

**Abstract:**

The relationships between the experience of “flow” as described by Csikszentmihalyi (1997) and the type of motivation that drives college students to play video games were examined in order to provide knowledge about an occupation that has become a growing trend in our society. Occupational therapists focus on how an appropriate balance of occupations influences individuals’ lives. Using the Modified Gambling Passion Scale and the Dispositional Flow Scale-2, college students indicated their video game playing background and completed measures of the experience from their perspective. The passion for video game playing is conceptually based on past research that looked at the addictive behavior of gambling. Results demonstrated support for the relationship between the experience of flow and both harmonious and obsessive passion. A significant correlation was found between prior video game experience and the flow dimension ( $r = .288, p = .001$ ). Results are discussed in relationship to prior research and future clinical directions.

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**Title:** Understanding the Occupational Concerns within the Lives of Women with Spinal Cord Injury

**Researchers:** Allison DiFebo, OTS, Tracey Ganz, OTS, and Gina Pfeiffer, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Grace Fisher

**Reader:** Dr. Lalit Shah

**Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was to identify the primary occupational concerns of women with spinal cord injuries (SCI). To help identify these concerns we sought to answer questions pertaining to the occupational challenges faced by the participants, the way those challenges affected the quality of their lives, pre-injury to post-injury perspectives of their futures, adaptation methods, their goals, and necessary resources needed or available. Semi-structured interviews with three women were conducted by telephone to obtain information regarding their concerns associated with occupation, relationships, pregnancy/parenthood, sexuality, employment, life satisfaction, and healthcare. The results of the study showed that despite all of the difficulties faced, each woman was able to come to an understanding and accept the severity of her injury and its implications. Each woman obtained the necessary resources needed to move forward with her life. Differences were also noted, as each participant had unique experiences associated with her injury. It was concluded that advocacy and awareness of women with SCIs should be addressed more frequently, not only through support groups, but also in the literature, to properly understand their occupational concerns.