

INPLASY PROTOCOL

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A scoping review protocol on Occupational Science Research in European Contexts

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Review question / Objective: Researchers may conduct scoping reviews instead of systematic reviews where the purpose of the review is to identify knowledge gaps, scope a body of literature, clarify concepts or to investigate research conduct. While useful in their own right, scoping reviews may also be helpful precursors to systematic reviews and can be used to confirm the relevance of inclusion criteria and potential questions. (Munn et al. *BMC Medical Research Methodology* (2018) 18:143) The aim of this review is to scope the empirical-based and peer-reviewed European OS research literature and map identified research methods, theories or theoretical concepts, and target groups to obtain a status quo overview of OS research undertaken in Europe between 2015 and 2020. Research questions: • What recent development is seen when mapping the empirical-based and peer-reviewed European OS research literature in accordance with publication volume, publication date and geographical context? • What characterizes the identified research methods, theories or theoretical concepts, and target groups applied in the peer-reviewed OS research literature?

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INTRODUCTION

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and potential questions. (Munn et al. BMC Medical Research Methodology (2018) 18:143) The aim of this review is to scope the empirical-based and peer-reviewed European OS research literature and map identified research methods, theories or theoretical concepts, and target groups to obtain a status quo overview of OS research undertaken in Europe between 2015 and 2020. Research questions:

- What recent development is seen when mapping the empirical-based and peer-reviewed European OS research literature in accordance with publication volume, publication date and geographical context?
- What characterizes the identified research methods, theories or theoretical concepts, and target groups applied in the peer-reviewed OS research literature?

Background: Recent surveys identified that OS in Europe is a growing discipline. The Occupational Science Europe Research Committee (OSERC) was formed in 2012 and according to a survey done by the committee members (Clouston et al., 2019), European OS research suggested a broad understanding and variety of topics diversity of topics, research methods and scientific theoretical standpoints. Along with the range of research and network activities evidenced in this survey, Europe, with its diversity in culture and language, has the potential to add new perspectives and theories to the discourses within OS., showing that occupational science is growing in Europe. OS has first and foremost been developed in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and has gained momentum in Europe over the last decades. At the OS Europe conference in Hildesheim Ann Roberts gave her account of OS in Europe, which was later published. She stated “A body of theoretical and research publications has been generated from Europe, ... including the meaning of people’s engagement in occupation and the link to health and well-being.” However, there is a need to explore and describe the scope of OS around Europe, in order to map.

Rationale: In this scoping review, OS is defined as a scientific discipline dedicated

to the systematic study of the human as an occupational being, focusing on the form, function and meaning of human occupation, and illuminating the relationships between human activity, health, and well-being, social connections and environment.

A preliminary search of was conducted and no current or underway systematic reviews or scoping reviews on this topic were identified. Therefore, there is a need/call for to explore and describe the scope of OS around Europe, in order to map the questions asked and answered, and more importantly, to provide knowledge of current research as a valuable knowledge base for researchers within OS along with occupational therapy practitioners and researchers.

Accordingly, this scoping review will be undertaken to inspire and facilitate a creative growth of OS research, present a broader and more diverse understanding of OS, and thereby, contribute to the development and maturation of the discipline of OS internationally.

Applying the methodology of Levac, Colquhoun & O’Brian, a scoping review will be carried out to provide an overview of OS research studies conducted in a European context. Given the diversity of the OS research studies conducted in the European context, a scoping review was deemed the appropriate methodological choice to synthesize knowledge of the key concepts. To ensure a systematic methodology, The Joanna Briggs Institute Reviewers’ Manual – Methodology for the Joanna Briggs Institute Scoping Reviews 2015 edition will be judiciously applied.

METHODS

Strategy of data synthesis: The below mentioned journals will be systematically manually searched in pairs of two authors independently (JJ, AM, AR, M A-B, HKK). The inclusion and exclusion criteria will guide the search and all titles and abstracts in every publication will be screened for eligibility.

OS topics and concepts and theoretical themes will be derived from the critical appraisal and inductive content analysis of

the articles and presented in a structured narrative summary.

Eligibility criteria: This scoping review will consider studies based on both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The inclusion criteria are as follows: • Empirical-based OS research studies published in Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy (SJOT), British Journal of Occupational Therapy (BJOT) or Journal of Occupational Science (JOS). • English language articles to counteract translation problems. • Peer-reviewed OS research studies published between January 2015 – December 2020. Therefore, systematic reviews, text and opinion papers, which will not be considered for inclusion in this scoping review but may be integrated in the discussion section if they perspectivate the findings of the review.

Source of evidence screening and selection: Broad research questions will be constructed to capture the publication volume, date, participants and geographical context, along with research methods, and theoretical concepts. The three journals will be systematically manually searched by two reviewers independently in order to identify literature relevant to our research questions. The inclusion and exclusion criteria guides the search and will be used to screen titles and abstracts in the publications for eligibility. Any inconsistencies between the reviewers will be resolved by consulting one more reviewer. The articles will be given a thorough appraisal guided by the JBI Critical Appraisal Tool in order to evaluate the methodological quality of the included studies. The quality appraisal of the included studies based on qualitative designs encompassed dependability, credibility and grading inspired by the ConQual Approach. Dependability of each study will be established through the assessment from the JBI Critical Appraisal Tool, where five questions of this checklist will be viewed as relating to the concept of dependability. To assess the credibility of each study's findings we will determine the congruency of the data and the authors' interpretation by adopting Munn et al.'s

ranking scale: unequivocal, Equivocal and unsupported. In agreement with Munn et al., [14], where findings are unequivocal, we will rate their credibility as high. Mixed unequivocal/equivocal findings will be rated as moderate; a mix of plausible/unsupported findings will be rated as low; and unsupported findings will be rated as very low. For studies based on quantitative designs the quality appraisal followed the same chain of reasoning and grading inspired by the ConQual Approach by Munn et al. The quality of each study will be established through the appraisals by applying the JBI Critical Appraisal Tool. In these appraisals the numbers of questions of the checklist also decide the ranking. Similarly, we will start with a ranking of 'high' on a scale of High, Moderate, Low to Very Low. Downgrading one level follows when two to three of the responses to the questions are negative (from High to Moderate). If more answers are negative, the study moves further down (from High to Low, or Moderate to Very Low). The review procedure and grading will be calibrated through a review and grading of five common articles by four main reviewers. Afterwards, two review teams from the OSERC independently will assess each article for full-text eligibility based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Any disagreement within the review teams regarding study selection for final inclusion will be solved by the contentious articles being emailed to the entire Research Committee for further consideration and decision.

Data management: Data will be extracted from the articles included in the scoping review by two or more independent reviewers using a data extraction systematic developed by the reviewers. The data extracted will include defined details on the participants, concepts, context, study methods and key findings relevant to the review questions. The data extraction will be modified and revised when relevant during the process of extracting data from each included study. Modifications will be detailed in the scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers will be

resolved through discussion, or with additional reviewers. To generate a more nuanced understanding of the emerging OS knowledge base, a further content analysis of the included studies will be carried out, separating and mapped them in accordance with the four levels of theory and research: descriptive, relational, predictive, and prescriptive as presented in the 2011 Ruth Zemke Lecture.

Presentation of the results: The results presented in the findings will aim to answer the research questions by mapping the empirical-based and peer-reviewed European OS research literature in accordance with publication volume, publication date and geographical context. It will furthermore characterizes the identified research methods, theories or theoretical concepts, and target groups applied in the peer-reviewed literature. Hence, the characteristics of the study details on the participants, concepts, context, study methods and key findings relevant to the review questions will be presented in at short table and an extended and detailed appendix (with the included research studies). These tables will also include the four levels by Pierce as well as the quality assessments. The descriptive findings will be elaborated in a comprehensive narrative summary and discussion presenting OS topics and concepts.

Language restriction: English.

Country(ies) involved: Austria, Denmark, Germany, Israel, UK and Sweden.

Other relevant information: Further information about the OSERC can be found at <https://os-europe.org/research-committee/>

Keywords: Knowledge base. occupational science, occupation, research methods, theoretical concepts.

Dissemination plans: The review is for publication in Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy.

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