

Jo Adams

Research Foundation Systematic Review Grant

Title: *The impact of occupational therapy on the self-management of rheumatoid arthritis: a mixed methods systematic review.*

What we want to do and why?

Occupational therapy can support people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) to manage their illness in their everyday lives. 'Self-management' is central to occupational therapy, and for RA can improve pain, fatigue and mental health. Self-management includes different activities, like physical activity, eating and sleeping well, and seeking medical help. These 'self-care' activities can help to lessen the physical, mental and emotional impacts.

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has made it very hard for people with RA to self-manage. However, we do not have up-to-date knowledge about whether occupational therapy can help people to self-manage their RA (and how). That is before and after the pandemic. To address this, we will examine the impact of occupational therapy on the self-management of RA, especially on people's 'lived' experiences of the condition.

How will we do it?

Two scientists will identify relevant information on how occupational therapy impacts the self-management of people with RA, including (but not limited to) their physical symptoms (like pain and fatigue), mental health (like depression) and emotional wellbeing (called 'occupational balance'). Next, they will assess and summarise the information, with help from a third scientist.

What will we achieve?

This review will provide the best evidence about how occupational therapy can help people self-manage RA that we have today. It will show examples of best practice, such as training methods, advice and counselling given by occupational therapists. This will help us design future research to help both health services and people with RA.