



Rehabilitative Palliative Care - Adults

This Evidence Spotlight provides some key reading, selected from the evidence base, about rehabilitative palliative care. It is intended to provide an introduction to the topic. Each paper is listed under a broad subject heading, alongside related CPD activities applicable to the four pillars of the RCOT Career Development Framework: Professional Practice; Facilitation of Learning; Leadership; and Evidence, Research and Development (RCOT 2021).

Introduction and Overview

Rehabilitative palliative care is a person-centred and holistic interdisciplinary approach to support people with life limiting conditions to live life fully and achieve their personal goals and priorities, whilst still acknowledging the inevitability of death. It involves all members of the palliative care team working collaboratively with the person, their relatives and carers and integrates rehabilitation, enablement, self-management and self-care (Tiberini and Richardson 2015, National Palliative and End of Life Care Partnership 2021).

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance on end of life care for adults (NICE 2019) makes recommendations regarding providing multi-practitioner care, including access to expertise from highly skilled health and social care practitioners when needed. It also identifies the need for health and social care practitioners to have the skills to provide care for individuals who need support in a range of areas including physical, psychological, social, spiritual and cultural, as well as activities of daily living.

Occupational Therapy is one of the key professions that contribute to interdisciplinary palliative care teams. Occupational therapists may work as core members of the interdisciplinary team or may receive referrals from the team. They can be based in primary care, the community, a hospice or hospital setting. The person-centred, enabling approach of rehabilitative palliative care aligns well with the profession's ethos. Occupational therapists can help people to participate in the occupations that matter to them, maintain as much normality as possible within their daily lives and achieve their personal goals.

RCOT is part of the National Palliative and End of Life Care Partnership, a broad partnership of national organisations committed to improving end of life care. The partnership has produced a framework for action that presents an overarching vision for palliative and end of life care, together with six key ambitions. Rehabilitative palliative care is identified as an important building block in realising the ambition of maximising a person's comfort and wellbeing (National Palliative and End of Life Care Partnership 2021).

This Evidence Spotlight has been produced in collaboration with the RCOT Specialist Section - Major Health Conditions. It includes a broad but not exhaustive range of research papers to provide a starting point for critically considering the evidence base, with accompanying CPD activities.

References:

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2019) *End of life care for adults: service delivery* (NICE Guideline 142). London: NICE. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng142>

National Palliative and End of Life Care Partnership (2021) *Ambitions for palliative and end of life care: a national framework for local action 2021-2026*. [s.l.]: National Palliative and End of Life Care Partnership. Available at: <https://learninghub.nhs.uk/catalogue/ambitionspartnership>

Tiberini R, Richardson H (2015) *Rehabilitative palliative care: enabling people to live fully until they die: a challenge for the 21st century*. London: Hospice UK. Available at: <https://professionals.hospiceuk.org/what-we-offer/clinical-and-care-support/rehabilitative-palliative-care/resources-for-rehabilitative-palliative-care>

All websites accessed on: 04.01.22.

Selected Evidence

Occupations creating joy for people living with advanced cancer

A qualitative study by Bentz et al (2021), which utilised data from a randomised controlled trial, aimed to describe occupations that contribute to joy for people living with advanced cancer and explore how they reflected on such occupations during an occupational therapy intervention. Participants were recruited from two Danish hospitals. Data were collected through free listing (participants were asked to list a maximum of five occupations they perceived as contributing to joy) and observing participants during occupational therapy sessions in their own homes. 148 occupations were reported and the majority (89%) were categorised as leisure. Analysis revealed participants had three approaches to occupations contributing to joy: finding solutions to maintain the occupations; having an 'all or nothing' approach to the occupations; and hoping to resume them.

Reference:

Bentz HH, Madsen SH, Pilegaard MS, Østergaard LG, Brandt Å, Offersen SMH, la Cour K (2021) Occupations creating joy for people living with advanced cancer: a qualitative descriptive study. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, May 05. [Epub ahead of print].

Quality of life for people with advanced cancer who live at home

A Danish study by Peoples et al (2021) utilised semi-structured and photo elicitation interviews to explore, from an occupational perspective, how people with advanced cancer living at home perceive quality of life (QoL). Thematic analysis identified three interrelated themes: 'quality of life during changing circumstances', 'striving to continue everyday life' and 'being independent and connected'. The authors conclude that the findings emphasise the importance of continuity of everyday life, with ongoing changes/adjustments to maintain QoL. However, these adjustments may not always be possible due to the progression of cancer. They also identify that loss of independence and increased dependence may lead to a new sense of interdependence and closeness with family and friends, which can positively influence QoL.

Reference:

Peoples H, Nissen N, Brandt Å, la Cour K (2021) Perceptions of quality of life by people with advanced cancer who live at home. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 84(11), 723–730.

Career Development Framework Pillars

Suggested CPD Activities

Professional Practice

After reading the paper, reflect on participants' approaches to the occupations and their conversations with an occupational therapist.

Consider how you could work with people with advanced cancer to facilitate engagement in occupations that create joy.

Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) hint:

Consider barriers to identifying what is meaningful to the person, including the potential influence of your own professional or cultural biases, and how you can overcome them.

Evidence, Research and Development

Facilitation of Learning

After reading the paper, consider how engaging in meaningful occupations can contribute to the quality of life of people with life limiting conditions.

JEDI hint:

Reflect on how perspectives about quality of life can be influenced by personal or cultural factors, for example the value placed on independence and interdependence.

Consider potential benefits of researchers examining the assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives they may bring to qualitative research (reflexivity).

Mapping the scope of occupational therapy practice in palliative care

Eva and Morgan (2018) carried out an online cross-sectional survey of occupational therapists, whose caseload included people accessing palliative care, to map the scope of occupational therapy practice in palliative care across Europe and explore their perceptions of opportunities and challenges. 237 responses, from 21 countries, were analysed (just over half were from the UK). Findings included a consistency between European countries in occupational therapy palliative care practice and high levels of involvement in direct and indirect patient care. However, the authors identify a need for capacity building in leadership and research within this practice context.

Reference:

Eva G, Morgan D (2018) Mapping the scope of occupational therapy practice in palliative care: a European Association for Palliative Care cross-sectional survey. *Palliative Medicine*, 32(5), 960–968. doi: 10.1177/0269216318758928

Efficacy of an occupational therapy-based intervention

Pilegaard et al (2018) conducted a randomised controlled trial, involving people with advanced cancer living at home, to evaluate the efficacy of the 'Cancer Home-Life Intervention' (an occupational therapy-based programme). Participants, recruited from two Danish hospitals, were allocated to the intervention or usual care. Outcomes related to performance of and participation in everyday activities, and health-related quality of life (HRQoL). Assessments were carried out at baseline, and 6- and 12-week follow-up. No statistically significant effect of the intervention was found. The authors conclude that the intervention, in most cases delivered through one home visit and a follow-up telephone call, was not effective in maintaining/improving participants' everyday activities or HRQoL.

Reference:

Pilegaard MS, la Cour K, Gregersen Oestergaard L, Johnsen AT, Lindahl-Jacobsen L, Højris I, Brandt Å (2018) The 'Cancer Home-Life Intervention': a randomised controlled trial evaluating the efficacy of an occupational therapy-based intervention in people with advanced cancer. *Palliative Medicine*, 32(4), 744–756. doi: 10.1177/0269216317747199

Professional self-care

Apostol et al (2021), in an Australian study, evaluated a multi-dimensional strategy to improve the professional self-care of occupational therapists working with people living with life limiting conditions. 55 occupational therapists completed a survey pre-intervention and 48 completed it post-intervention. Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed. Findings included that the majority of participants identified more than one source of support as personally relevant, with support from other staff and supervision prevalent. However, around half identified further needs regarding professional self-care.

Reference:

Apostol C, Cranwell K, Hitch D (2021) Evaluating a multidimensional strategy to improve the professional self-care of occupational therapists working with people with life limiting illness. *BMC Palliative Care*, 20: 2. doi: 10.1186/s12904-020-00695-x

Evidence, Research and Development

Leadership

Consider how you could help advance occupational therapy in palliative care, for example through establishing leadership networks or developing links between academia and practice.

JEDI hint:

Consider how opportunities to promote the involvement of underrepresented groups in practice and research activities could be developed.

Evidence, Research and Development

Professional Practice

Consider possible reasons for the findings, particularly in terms of the research design and how the intervention was delivered.

Consider potential ways in which the efficacy of an intervention for people with advanced cancer living at home could be improved. Explore the potential benefits of co-production in developing interventions.

JEDI hint:

Consider ways in which a similar intervention could be developed with and offered to people experiencing homelessness.

Leadership

Professional Practice

Consider how the service you work in could support the professional self-care of occupational therapists.

JEDI hint:

Consider how occupational therapists' needs could differ due to personal, cultural and religious factors.

Access to journal articles

RCOT members can access the full text of these articles via the e-journals collection or, in the case of open access articles, via the link/DOI provided in the reference.

Access the RCOT e-journals collection at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/journals-and-e-journals>

The journals and e-journals webpage provides links to the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* (AJOT), *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal* (AOTJ), *British Journal of Occupational Therapy* (BJOT) and *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy* (CJOT).

A wide range of other journals are available via the 'Browse all international e-journals' link.

Career Development Framework

The Career Development Framework: Guiding Principles for Occupational Therapy, 2nd edition (RCOT 2021) is an over-arching set of guiding principles for occupational therapy and offers a structured process to guide careers, learning and development within our profession. It contains four interacting Pillars of Practice (each with nine Career Levels):

- Professional Practice
- Facilitation of Learning
- Leadership
- Evidence, Research and Development

Access the framework at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/cpd-rcot>

Further reading

Members can access a wide range of literature through the RCOT Library e-books and e-journals collections, as well as via the CINAHL and Medline databases.

The RCOT Library has produced a series of information skills guides to help members get the most out of the resources available. They cover a range of subjects, from accessing the e-journal and e-books collections, through to searching databases and carrying out literature searches.

Access the guides at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/information-skills>

The library catalogue is available at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/search-library-catalogue>

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