

ELASTIC OBSTACLE COURSE FOR PSYCHIATRIC SYMPTOMS OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

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ABSTRACT

Background: Use of physical activity such as exercise with resistance, a nonpharmacological treatment (NPT) approach in support to the management of symptoms of psychiatric disorders, though scarce, has been widely published. Arts and crafts, the common therapeutic resource of occupational therapy (OT) in mental health setting since the profession's existence has been applied. Opportunities for recreational activities is in the heart of the OT profession.

Aim: To investigate the effect of the treatment as usual (TAU) only using arts and crafts versus the TAU plus elastic obstacle course (EO) in the difference in Comprehensive Occupational Therapy Evaluation (COTE) scores as an indicator of change and improvement in the general behavior, interpersonal behavior and task behavior of psychiatric patients.

Method: Study population (n=13), after screening, were randomized into the control (TAU only) and the experimental (TAU + EO) groups. Both cohorts received five (5) days of OT sessions utilizing the same individual and group TAU. Comprehensive Occupational Therapy Evaluation (COTE) scale was used to assess the behavior. Wilcoxon-Mann Whitney Test was used for profile comparison of patients' numerical variables across TAU only and TAU + EO groups. Level of significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$

Results: The initial data shows statistical significance in the improvement of behavior from baseline and after days 1-5 of OT sessions utilizing TAU + EO (p value = 0.028). TAU only group did not show significant difference (p value = 0.063) in behavior change. Statistical finding (p value = 0.199) showed no significant difference in comparison post treatment between the TAU only and TAU + EO groups regardless of exposure to EO.

Conclusion: Generally, the variables of interest such as the general, interpersonal and task behaviors improved as indicated in the change in COTE scores post treatment for both cohorts. This novel, creative, recreational yet therapeutic activity is another proof of OTs worth in the realm of evidence-based practice, reducing symptoms of psychiatric illness motivating to physically perform, to be productive and not be confined to idleness.

Keywords: Nonpharmacological treatment (NPT), Occupational Therapy (OT), Comprehensive Occupational Therapy Evaluation (COTE) scale, mental health, arts and crafts