Occupational Imbalance: A time use of Australian mothers of school aged children with a disability

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1. Describe the time use of Australian mothers of school aged children with a disability

2. Compare the time use of mothers of children
   • with vs. without a disability
   • with physical vs. cognitive/behavioural limitations
   • with a disability, aged 5–11 vs. 12–18 years
Participants

Mother
• Biological or adoptive mother

Child with a disability
• 5 – 18 years
• Attending a formal education program
• Assistance in 2 or more of:
  • Mobility/transfers
  • Eating
  • Playing (indoors/outdoors)
  • Dressing
  • Toileting
  • Communication
Demographic questionnaire

Information about mother & family
• Mother’s birth factors
  • Age & culture
• Social status
  • Education, occupation & family income
• Role factors
  • Employment, marital status, dependent children/adults
• Ecological factors
  • Rural vs. urban location

Information about the Child
• Age
• Areas and type of assistance
Participants

Response rate = 73%

Care predominantly required
  • Physical limitations = 20
  • Cognitive/behavioural limitations = 21

Age of child with a disability
  • 5 – 11 years = 26
  • 12 – 18 years = 15
## Description of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage/Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average child’s age</td>
<td>10.4 yrs (SD 3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas of assistance</td>
<td>6.1 (SD 1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 children with disability</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child &lt;4yrs</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children</td>
<td>2.1 (SD 0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological mother</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live in relationship</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post secondary education</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid work</td>
<td>54% (ave 21.6 hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income over $50,000</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant cultural influence</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>Toileted Sally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>Put Sally in bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>Kettle on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>Read paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significant results 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Mothers of children with a disability (min/day)</th>
<th>Mothers of typically developing children * (min/day)</th>
<th>p **</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child related activities</td>
<td>342 (SD 129)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal care</td>
<td>94 (SD 35)</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
<td>452 (SD 62)</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing</td>
<td>28 (SD 27)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>112 (SD 60)</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


** p derived by a series of one sample two-tailed t-tests
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Physical (n = 20)</th>
<th>Cognitive/behavioural (n = 21)</th>
<th>p*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child related</td>
<td>396 (SD 105)</td>
<td>291 (SD 130)</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>92 (SD 49)</td>
<td>131 (SD 63)</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive leisure</td>
<td>72 (SD 47)</td>
<td>109 (SD 48)</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p derived by two-tailed Mann-Whitney U test
Mothers of children with a disability spend
• More time in child related activities
• Less time in personal care, sleep, purchasing & leisure

Mothers providing care for
• Physical limitations: more time in child care
• Cognitive/behavioural limitations: more passive leisure

Mothers of different aged children
• No significant difference in time use
• Time use pattern is ongoing
Implications 1

To maintain mother’s health and well-being

- Restore occupational balance
  - Reduce time in child care
    - Functional interventions
    - Flexible services
    - Minimise travel and waiting time
    - Communication between health professionals
    - Respite and home services
Implications 2

To maintain mother’s health and well-being

• Restore occupational balance
  • Increase time/quality of other occupations
    • Services for parents independent of the child
    • Child friendly environments in the community
    • Domestic assistance
    • Health services
Future research

• Further time use study
  • Increased participant numbers
  • More defined sub category coding system
• Time use study in association with
  • Subjective questionnaire on balance;
  • Health and well-being questionnaire
• Qualitative studies of experiences and balance perceptions
• Effects of the mother’s time use and health on the child
• Other groups of caregivers
Time use methodology

Advantages

• Descriptive
• Objective
• Good reliability

Limitations

• No subjective component
• Time consuming for participants
Acknowledgement

• The individuals and organisations who assisted in recruiting participants
• The mothers who participated, expressed interest and provided feedback
• Fiona McQualter for re-coding diaries for reliability
• Sue Cotton for advice on statistics
• Helen Bourke-Taylor and Janet Fricke for their direction


