

Occupational Therapy in adults with Multiple Sclerosis

A Cochrane Systematic Review

Ms. Ashley Boers, Mrs. Ciara O’Meara, Dr. Isaline Eijssen, Dr. Leen de Coninck, Dr. Geertruida Bekkering, Mrs. Marja Koen, Prof. Jennifer Freeman, Dr. Sinéad Hynes,
Prof. Daphne Kos



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BACKGROUND

People with multiple sclerosis (PwMS) report benefits from occupational therapy (OT).

With the last Cochrane systematic review conducted two decades ago (Steultjens et al., 2003)

There was a critical need for updated evidence.



OBJECTIVES

- Effectiveness of OT interventions for improving daily functioning, participation, and Quality of Life in PwMS.
- Differences in effects of OT interventions according to the format of intervention delivery and to the location of service delivery.

Method: Cochrane Systematic review

Eligibility criteria

- Controlled clinical trials (RCT and non-RCT)
- Adults diagnosed with MS
- OT interventions
- All clinical settings and formats

Outcomes

- Daily functioning
 - Quality of life
 - Adverse effects
- Secondary outcomes
- Participation; Resilience; Self-efficacy; Self-management; Mood; Impact on caregivers

Data collection and analysis



Published protocol



Results

- 20 studies (17 RCTs, 3 NRCTs)
- Intervention:
 - Fatigue management: 10 studies
 - Skills training / cognitive empowerment: 9 studies
 - Social participation: 1 study

Short Term



After OT:

Improved Daily Functioning & Mental HR-QoL

- No Change in Physical HR-QoL or Participation

Medium Term



3-6 Months After OT:

- Better Mental HR-QoL
- Little Impact on Daily Activities & Physical HR-QoL

Long Term



Long-Term

- Uncertain Benefits & Risks
- Lack of Long-Term Data

Figure created using AI

Conclusion

Benefits of OT on daily functioning and mental QOL
Evidence certainty: low to very low

Challenges

- Small studies
- Functions vs. daily functioning
- Multidimensional nature of intervention
- Validated instruments for PwMS

Action needed to get the evidence into practice!

Equity

- OT for people with severely disability?
- Other cultures?



Ashley.boers@kuleuven.be
Daphne.kos@kuleuven.be

Published study

