

Meaningful Occupation and Health: Facts or Fiction?

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*Presenter has nothing to disclose

Does Research Support OT Assumptions?

1. "Engagement in meaningful activities promotes brain health."

Meaningful and enjoyable activities



Cognitive Health ¹

Stimulating leisure activities



Risk of dementia in < 10 years ²

Leisure →



.83-fold lower risk of all-cause dementia (N= 2,154,818) ³

References

1 Anthony, M., Turnbull, A., Tadin, D., & Lin, F. (2024). Positive Affect Disrupts Neurodegeneration Effects on Cognitive Training Plasticity in Older Adults. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 19(1). <https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsae004>

2 Heikkilä, K., Pentti, J., Dekhtyar, S., Ervasti, J., Fratiglioni, L., Härkänen, T., . . . Stenholm, S. (2024). Stimulating leisure-time activities and the risk of dementia: a multi-cohort study. *Age Ageing*, 53(7). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afae141>

3 Su, S., Shi, L., Zheng, Y., Sun, Y., Huang, X., Zhang, A., . . . Lu, L. (2022). Leisure Activities and the Risk of Dementia: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Neurology*, 99(15), e1651-e1663. <https://doi.org/10.1212/wnl.0000000000200929>

2. "Participation in meaningful occupations leads to improved health and well-being"

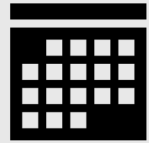
Author(s)	Health/Well-being	Quality of Life	Other
Hwang et al. (2020) [SR]	√	√	Diet quality Sleep quality
Lentner et al. (2025) [SR]	√	√	
Nielsen et al. (2022) [SR]	√		Sleep quality
Lentner et al. (2025)			Occupational balance
Petruseviciene et al. (2018)		√	Emotional functions, Sleep quality
Smith & Fields (2020)	√	√	Activity engagement

2 Factors Enhance Elderly's Wellbeing

1. Variation & Independence in doing



2. Choice & Structure of activities



Jessen-Winge, C., Petersen, M. N., & Morville, A. L. (2018). The influence of occupation on wellbeing, as experienced by the elderly: a systematic review. *JBI Database System Rev Implement Rep*, 16(5), 1174-1189. <https://doi.org/10.11124/jbisrir-2016-003123>

"Purpose and meaning in life activities influence happiness and/or longevity."



Meaning in Life
Personal growth
Improved health
Enhanced social relationships
affect & Life satisfaction
Work-related self-efficacy¹

Leisure

1 Iso-Ahola, S. E., & Baumeister, R. F. (2023). Leisure and meaning in life. *Front Psychol*, 14, 1074649.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1074649>

Summary

Evidence supports these assumptions:

"Engagement in meaningful activities promotes brain health."



"Participation in meaningful occupations leads to improved health and well-being"



"Purpose and meaning in life activities influence happiness and/or longevity."



For reference list or questions,
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