Title: The short term influence of sensory integration intervention on the individual with disorders characterized by symptoms of psychosis

KEY WORDS

Individuals with psychosis, occupational therapy, sensory integration intervention, occupational performance

ABSTRACT

Back ground: Successful engagement in occupations is the overall outcome of occupational therapy treatment and purposeful participation in activities is central in an occupational therapy program. The framework of sensory integration provides for the assessment and treatment[1]of occupational performance problems related to functions supported by the sensory systems. **Methods:** The short term influence of sensory integration intervention on people with disorders charactarised by symptoms of psychosis was investigated by using a quantitative, randomised, controlled single blind clinical trial. Ninety-nine (99) adult Mental Health Care Users (MHCUs) with symptoms of psychosis admitted to acute wards of a psychiatric institution in the Free State participated in the study. The occupational performance of the experimental- and control groups were established through using the "Therapeutic Functional Level Assessment" (TFLA) and the sensory integration functions of the experimental group were established using "Schroeder, Block and Campbell Adult Psychiatric Sensory Integration Evaluation" (SBC). Both groups were exposed to the standard occupational therapy intervention program of the specific wards and the experimental group was exposed to a two week (eight sessions) sensory integration intervention program. The TFLA and the SBC were used in the same manner to do the post-tests. **Results:** Although limited statistically significant differences were found, both groups showed clinical improvements. The experimental group showed statistically significant differences in the improvement of selfcare, social behaviour (logical speech and communication), appearance and the occurance of delusions and hallucinations, when compared to the control group. Statistical differences were found in the physical assesment aspects of the experimental group on the SBC evaluation. Improvements were noted in this group in functions supported by the vestibular-proprioceptive system, the somatosensory system and the visual-vestibular system. **Conclusion:** Continued research with regard to the effect of sensory integration intervension on the MHCU appears to be warrented. Occupational therapists should also consider using sensory integration intervention, together with the standard occupational therapy intervention program in the treatment of the person with psychosis in order to optimise function and occupational performance.