



MASTER RESEARCH THESIS IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY, 20 credits
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Title

Ball blankets and heat cushions as therapeutic tools for persons with dementia – the experience of health care personnel

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Abstract

Background: Behavioural and psychological symptoms in dementia often obstruct patients from doing activities of daily living of their own choice as well as from resting or simply “being”. Sensory stimulation has been suggested as one possible therapy.

Aim: Describing how health care personnel reasoned about using ball blankets, toy animals and wheat grain cushions as therapeutic tools for patients with dementia.

Method: An interview study with qualitative approach, based on grounded theory was chosen. Twenty-five nursing staff, two occupational therapists and the head of four elderly homes for persons with dementia, were interviewed.

Result: When analysing the interviews five themes emerged: Reasons for offering; Strategies when offering; Effect on and reactions from the patients; Explanations to reactions; Obstacles in offering.

Conclusions: The results suggest that some persons with dementia can benefit from using the suggested therapeutic tools. It also describes some of the risks connected to the use. The results are discussed in an occupational therapy perspective.

Key words: Behavioural and psychological symptoms in dementia, dementia, occupational therapy, sensory stimulation, therapeutic tools