

NAPCRG 52nd Annual Meeting — Abstracts of Completed Research 2024.

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**Title**

*What is the role of occupational therapists with the older adult population in primary care?*

**Priority 1 (Research Category)**

Geriatrics

**Presenters**

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**Abstract**

Context: The practice of occupational therapy in primary care is still developing in Quebec and in Canada. Although occupational therapists contribute to the overall improvement of primary care services, their presence in family medicine groups is still limited, mainly due to a lack of knowledge about their role in this practice context. Based on the results of previous studies and systematic reviews, occupational therapy has a great role to play with the older adults population to prevent their health and functional decline and make sure they can maintain the best quality of life. However, it is important to clarify what are the priority interventions they should offer to adapt to the primary care context and the needs of the clientele followed in this specific environment.

Objective: Define the occupational therapy services that should be offered to older adults in primary care in collaboration with primary care teams.

Study design and analysis: A qualitative descriptive design was used. Two focus groups were conducted with experienced clinicians and researchers acting as key-informants on the subject. Results were analysed using a qualitative analytical questioning approach.

Setting: Quebec, Canada

Population: People aged 65 years old and over and at-risk of functional decline

Instruments: The Teams video conferencing platform was used for data collection and recording.

Results: In family medicine groups, older adults should be referred in occupational therapy as soon as they report difficulties in carrying out daily activities including mobility at home and in the community, self-care and participation in leisure activities. Occupational therapists were considered to have a major

role in preventing fragility because of their competencies to screen for risk factors and provide early interventions. They were also considered an excellent professional to help patients navigate and access resources in the community to prevent social isolation and maintain social participation. Results also highlighted how occupational therapists can support caregivers followed in primary care to prevent exhaustion and mental health disorders.

Conclusion: Occupational therapists working in family medicine groups can significantly contribute to the prevention of multiple conditions and functional decline of older adults for which early interventions should be provided in a primary care setting.

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