



Elizabethtown College

Occupational Performance in Males with Breast Cancer

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Learning Objectives: Participants will be able to:

- Identify the etiology of male versus female breast cancer;
- Discuss personal, occupational, and environmental factors that affect daily life of males with breast cancer;
- Discuss how occupational therapists can address factors in improving the quality of life in men with breast cancer.

Purpose:

The aim of this study was to understand the occupational performance of men with breast cancer and to raise awareness of their challenges within the rehabilitation and oncology fields. The *Person-Environment-Occupation Model* served as a guiding framework to understand the diagnosis, treatment, and recovery stages of male breast cancer within an occupational context.

Methods:

A qualitative phenomenological approach was used to understand the lived experience of men with breast cancer. Convenience and snowball sampling was used to recruit 25 male participants, diagnosed with breast cancer. Participants shared their experiences in semi structured phone interviews. Questions were open-ended and conversational to gain a full narrative story of the impact cancer had in their everyday lives. Interviews were transcribed and coded into themes.

Results:

Qualitative data was analyzed, with themes that best represented participants' responses in each interview. Themes were organized contextually through the PEO model to provide a deeper understanding of the men's participation in daily activities. Common themes included altered participation in meaningful occupations, changes in role fulfillment, and the importance of advocacy in the participants' lives after receiving a diagnosis.

Conclusion:

An incongruence in the person, environment, and occupational factors of the PEO model can result in decreased performance and participation in daily occupations. This first study of its kind demonstrated how occupational performance is affected in this unique population. We aimed to gain a broader understanding of healthcare professionals' and occupational therapy's role in increasing quality of life in males with breast cancer.