

Effects of Occupational Therapy on Children with Unilateral Cerebral Palsy

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Abstract : Cerebral Palsy (CP) represents the most frequent cause of physical disability in children with a rate of 2,9 per 1000 live births. The activity-focused intervention is known to improve function and reduce activity limitations and barriers to participation of children with disabilities. The aim of the study was to assess the effects of occupational therapy on level of fatigue, activity performance and satisfaction in children with Unilateral Cerebral Palsy. Twenty-two children with hemiparetic cerebral palsy (mean age: $9,3 \pm 2.1$ years; Gross Motor Function Classification System (GMFCS) level from I to V (I = 54%, II = 23%, III = 14%, IV = 9%, V = 0%), Manual Ability Classification System (MACS) level from I to V (I = 40%, II = 32%, III = 14%, IV = 10%, V = 4%), were assigned to occupational therapy program for 6 weeks. Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) was used for intensity of the fatigue they experienced at the time on a 10 point Likert scale (1-10). Activity performance and satisfaction were measured with Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM). A client-centered occupational therapy intervention was designed according to results of COPM. The results were compared with nonparametric Wilcoxon test before and after the intervention. Thirteen of the children were right-handed, whereas nine of the children were left handed. Six weeks of intervention showed statistically significant differences in level of fatigue, compared to first assessment ($p < 0,05$). The mean score of first and the second activity performance scores were 4.51 ± 1.70 and 7.35 ± 2.51 respectively. Statistically significant difference between performance scores were found ($p < 0.01$). The mean scores of first and second activity satisfaction scores were of 2.30 ± 1.05 and 5.51 ± 2.26 respectively. Statistically significant difference between satisfaction assessments were found ($p < 0.01$). Occupational therapy is an evidence-based approach and occupational therapy interventions implemented by therapists were clinically effective on severity of fatigue, activity performance and satisfaction if implemented individually during 6 weeks.

Keywords : activity performance, cerebral palsy, fatigue, occupational therapy

Conference Title : ICOT 2018 : International Conference on Occupational Therapy

Conference Location : Singapore, SG

Conference Dates : March 22-23, 2018