

IPA Analysis: Exploring the Postsurgical Needs of Guatemalan Children & Their Families From Low-SES Communities Using an OT Lens

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PURPOSE: This study seeks to understand the post-surgical needs of children and their families from low SES communities in the global South. While a significant decline in infant mortality is reported in these regions, there exists a spike in congenital and developmental disabilities. International short-term medical (STM) missions are organized to address surgical needs of this population, however, the post-surgery recovery is limited due to structural determinants of belonging to rural low SES communities. Hence, there is a vital need to study this situation and advocate for support to promote occupational engagement of children and the QOL of families. Therefore, the research question examined: What are the lived experiences and the challenges of habilitating/rehabilitating children from low SES families post-orthopedic surgeries provided by STM trips?

METHODOLOGY: A qualitative Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis was conducted. Participants (parent/guardian) (N=5) were selected using the following inclusion criteria: caring for a child between newborn-17 years of age, who is 6 weeks post-orthopedic surgery by an STM mission and had no follow-up services post-surgery. Data includes the investigator's field journal and semi-structured interviews. Data analysis underway consists of open coding, memoing, fracturing of data, and examining for emerging subordinate and superordinate themes.

FINDINGS: Preliminary emerging themes include, 'scarcity of resources and guidance,' 'facing multiple stressors impacting overall well-being,' 'fear, uncertainty, and hope,' 'hardships related to socio-economic factors'.

CONCLUSION: This study seeks to highlight the occupational injustices experienced by families from Guatemala, who are in need of post-surgical services to support their children's recovery. Global health missions need to consider using a holistic approach to address the occupational nature of children and their families to help better support these communities.

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