

Disruption in Daily Occupational Patterns, Optimism, and Positive Affect During Israel's COVID-19 Lockdown

Orit Segev-Jacobovski¹, Yael Fogel¹

¹Ariel University, Ariel, Israel

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Primary Author and Speaker: Orit Segev-Jacobovski, oritsj@gmail.com

PURPOSE: (1) to identify the changes in daily occupations patterns during the COVID-19 lockdown, including differences by gender, age and working status. (2) to elucidate the correlations between positive psychological factors such as optimism and positive affect and daily occupations during the lockdown. Investigation the degree of occupational engagement in various activities in routine and emergency situations is important for understanding the occupational adaptation. In April 2020, the Ministry of Health in Israel ordered a full lockdown, which lasted for two weeks because of COVID-19 pandemic outbreak (Israel Ministry of Health, 2020). Hence, the usual patterns of daily occupations were disturbed. Since positive psychological factors, such as positive affect and optimism, promote resilience and help in coping with stress (Fredrickson, 2004; Forgeard & Seligman, 2012), the significance of this study is based on its examination of which daily occupations were correlated with positive affect and optimism during the COVID-19 lockdown.

DESIGN: An anonymous voluntary retrospective and cross-sectional survey. The survey was undertaken during the COVID-19 full-lockdown. Participants were individuals aged 20 and older but excluded when employment status changed regardless of lockdown.

METHOD: An online survey link was disseminated through social platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp groups included demographic questions, and three questionnaires: Life Orientation Test (Scheier & Carver, 1985) assessing dispositional optimism, Positive Affect Questionnaire is part of the CES-D (Radloff, 1977), and Occupational Questionnaire (Smith et al., 1986) in which the respondents indicate their main activity during each waking hour (05:00–24:00) on a typical day and classify each activity as work, everyday task, recreation, or rest before and during lockdown.

RESULTS: The sample consisted of 481 participants, mean age of 44.78 (14.49), 85 male and 396 female. The results revealed a pattern of daily occupation before the lockdown that changed for everyone during the lockdown period. All subgroups (men, women, young people, middle age, participants with “regular income,” “reduced income,” and “significantly reduced income”) showed a lower percentage of hours per day devoted to work; with a higher percentage of hours per day devoted to everyday tasks, recreation, rest, and sleep in different ratios and order between the groups. Older adults showed different patterns of daily occupation. Within groups differences were found for all the sub-groups before and during the lockdown. However, only men and participants with regular income did not increased their hours of everyday task during the lockdown. Traditional roles of men as “providers” and women as “family caregivers” remained constant. No differences were found in positive affect between all subgroups. Optimism among participants with ‘regular income’ was higher than among participants with reduced income. Recreation activities before the lockdown were correlated with optimism and positive affect among women. During lockdown, a positive correlation was found between positive affect and recreational activities, and a negative correlation with rest. Among participants who had significantly reduced income, significant positive correlations were found between optimism and work before and during the lockdown.

CONCLUSION: The patterns of daily occupations changed for almost everyone following the COVID-19 outbreak. This study expanded the understanding of occupational disruption as a complex phenomenon, suggesting that recreational activities at home might promote resilience and could be an adaptive solution for coping with occupational disruption due to home quarantine directive.

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