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Exploring perceptions about positive mental health of students at a university in southern Karnataka –An occupational perspective

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Exploring perceptions about positive mental health of students at a university in southern Karnataka –An occupational perspective

Abstract

Introduction – Positive mental health (PMH) is essential for a healthy and fulfilling life. Poor mental health may lead to increased negative thoughts and the use of unhealthy coping mechanisms. This study aimed to explore university students' perceptions of PMH from an occupational perspective.

Method – Six focus groups with 4-8 participants each, recruited through purposive sampling were conducted and audio-recorded at a university in southern Karnataka. A semi-structured interview guide facilitated the data collection. Thematic analysis was done for the transcribed data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results – Two themes that emerged from the data: 'No health without mental health' and 'action plan for mental health.' The findings portrayed participants' understanding of mental health and its relation to socio-emotional wellbeing, positive state of mind, and productivity. The participants described numerous facilitators like healthy lifestyles and barriers like negative life experiences. The participants described the use of various personal strategies and occupations, and their effect on mental health, in addition to suggesting ways for mental health promotion.

Conclusion – The findings suggest that students were mindful of the significance of the presence or absence of PMH. The youth is appreciating the role of daily habits and routines in maintaining PMH. Various awareness programs can be developed by integrating an occupational perspective.

Keywords – positive mental health, mental health, occupational perspective, occupational therapy, qualitative research, students