



oral presentation



Addiction in relation to occupation through the lens of the human subsystems: A scoping review

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The study of addiction

Research about the dark side of occupations is needed to conceptualize the complex nature of occupation¹. Addiction, an increasingly worldwide phenomenon, has been investigated through occupational perspectives. Although literature around addiction in relation to occupation exists, there is limited knowledge about how far occupational science and therapy literature has investigated the relationship between addiction and occupation.

Method

For the master's thesis of the European Master of Science in Occupational Therapy, the author conducted a scoping review underpinned by a critical realist stance. Articles published in peer-reviewed occupational therapy or occupational science journals between 2002-2022 were included. The human subsystems from *The model of the human as an occupational being*² has been used as a lens to evaluate the findings. The six subsystems were established to organize knowledge and are valuable for studying occupation². Part of the study was to test the usability of the subsystems in research.

Findings

Twenty-five research articles could be identified. All were published in English. The data could be allocated, linked and clustered through the lens of the subsystems. Overall, two main findings were found and will be further explained.

Negative and positive aspects of addiction

The findings revealed that negative and positive aspects of addiction occur simultaneously. Examples of positive (left) and negative (right) aspects of addiction for every subsystem are displayed in the following table.

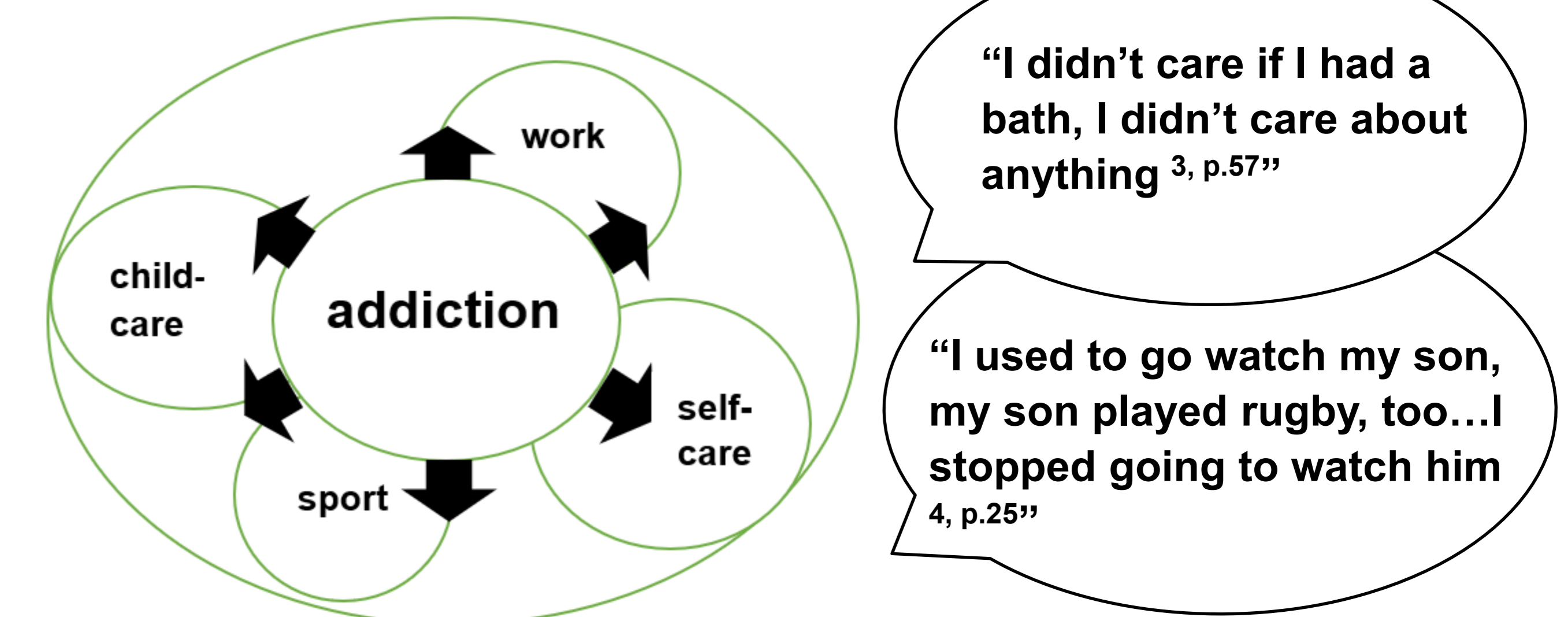
Physical subsystem	
Stress relief	Physical health problems
Biological subsystem	
Challenging activity that meets the need for competence	Reduce women's libido
Information-processing subsystem	
Increased concentration for a short period	Limitations in "finance managing"
Sociocultural subsystem	
Sense of belonging	Loss of relationships
Symbolic-evaluative subsystem	
Feeling of elation	Low self-perception
Transcendental subsystem	
Identity-building	Neglect of daily occupations

Note: Examples of positive (left) and negative (right) aspects of addiction

However, negative impacts tend to dominate where addiction grows. An example; although, drug use is mentioned as a positive used coping strategy, increased consumption caused by physical dependence can lead to severe health damages or can force some people to engage in occupations such as sex work.

Addiction as an 'overtaking occupation'

The analysis showed that over time addiction can become an 'overtaking occupation' consuming all time, energy and resources (emotional, financial and mental). Other occupations such as self-care, child-care or leisure occupations are neglected. The way addiction influences the orchestration of occupational lives can lead to an occupational imbalance³. The following image illustrates addiction as an 'overtaking occupation' through examples.



Note: Illustration of addiction as an 'overtaking occupation'

Conclusion

The newly identified concept of an 'overtaking occupation' can inform occupational science and occupational therapy practice. The analysis of the findings through the subsystems revealed new insights into the phenomenon, emphasizing its usability in research. Further research is needed to develop each subsystem and its application. It is essential to continue discussing and investigating the complex relationship between occupation and addiction and overall, its relation to health.

References

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