Approaches to engaging people with dementia in meaningful occupation in institutional settings: A scoping review

Abstract

Background: People with dementia in institutional settings lack engagement in meaningful occupations, which may cause decreased quality of life. Although many researchers and professionals have proposed approaches to engage people with dementia in these occupations, an overview seems to be missing.

Aim: This scoping review provides an overview by categorizing and describing the characteristics of the approaches.

Material and method: A thorough literature search in nine databases identified the studies on approaches. We included 54 studies and extracted bibliometric data. A content analysis revealed the characteristics of the approaches.

Results: Four categories of approaches were uncovered. First, the literature defined the concept of meaningful occupation in various ways. Second, a category of approaches provided theoretical knowledge of meaningful occupations. The third category focused on specific themes, such as certain methods. The final described comprehensive multilevel approaches.

Conclusion: This review contributes to knowledge of the diversity of approaches to engage people with dementia in meaningful occupation within institutional settings.

Significance: We suggest that occupational therapy researchers and practitioners consider how the concept of meaningful occupation is embedded in the theoretical landscape. Furthermore, activity programming requires reflexive decision-making at the policy and practice level, as engagement in meaningful occupations is complex.

Keywords: engagement, occupational therapy, quality of life, well-being

Introduction

People with dementia often lack opportunities to engage in meaningful occupation [1]. Engagement in occupations that are personally meaningful to a person contributes to perceived well-being and quality of life (QOL) [2, 3]. However, there is no consensus of how the concept of meaningful occupation is addressed within the literature. The concept is thereby described in various ways [3], often as personally valued occupation related to an individual’s interests, preferences, personhood, motivations, autonomy, pleasure, or perceived significance of participating in specific occupations [1, 4, 5].

As dementia affects a person’s abilities to perform and take part in their everyday occupations, in time of the progression of the disease most people living with dementia are dependent on their environment to continue engagement [6]. In Western countries, dementia care and activity provision are often part of public services [7]. The number of the oldest old is rising, and the prevalence of dementia is linked to increasing age [8], making activity provision an important issue in the public sector at a political level. Improving possibilities for engaging in meaningful occupations in individuals’ everyday lives has been underscored as a core value in national dementia strategies [7, 9, 10]. However, the
literature indicates that there is low levels of opportunities for occupations in care facilities [11]. Hence, studies indicate that residents in long-term care spend most of their time passive or without being occupied in a meaningful way [12, 13]. This deprivation of engagement has been found to negatively affect the QOL of this group of citizens [5]. Du Toit et al. [14] and others argue that the loss of the ability to participate in meaningful occupations caused by dementia puts the health and wellbeing of persons with dementia at risk [6, 15]. The lack of opportunities to engage in meaningful occupation arises for various reasons, such as symptoms of the disease, a lack of possibilities in the environment and the beliefs and strategies of those caring for the person with dementia [1]. Furthermore, research indicates that the quality of provided occupations tends to be low for various reasons, e.g., passive participation, lack of occupational choices and poor content [3]. The quality of activity programmes in the context of residential and day centre settings is also questioned by Milte et al. [16], who argue that the perspectives of people living with dementia and those of their relatives must be incorporated into the concept of quality. Occupational therapists focus on enablement of engagement in meaningful occupation despite the given circumstances in which a person finds him or herself within various settings [14]. Therefore, knowledge about approaches to provide activity programming in dementia care settings is of importance to occupational therapists. Approaches in current study is broadly understood as specific methods, theories, instruments or interventions applied to enable meaningful engagement.

Although many approaches from occupational therapy researchers and other different professional and scientific perspectives have been proposed to engage people with dementia in these occupations in institutional settings [17], an overview and description of these approaches seems to be lacking. Therefore, this scoping review aims to provide an overview and describe the characteristics of approaches that facilitate engagement in meaningful occupations among people with dementia within institutional settings. The purpose is to guide occupational therapists and other health care professionals in conducting meaningful and engaging activity programs.

**Methods and materials**

**Methodology**

A scoping review can guide the process of exploring and mapping the body of existing literature [18, 19]. Therefore, a scoping review was conducted to explore and describe the extent and characteristics of approaches to engagement in meaningful occupation from published scientific literature and from literature outside traditional scientific publishing [18]. A scoping review is useful for this purpose, as the literature on approaches is assumed to be of a heterogeneous nature. The framework outlined by Levac et al. [18] to obtain more clarity in scoping review methodology was applied. It consists of the following stages: (1) identifying the research question; (2) searching for relevant studies; (3) selecting studies; (4) charting the data; (5) collating, summarizing, and reporting the results; and (6) consulting with stakeholders (optional).

**Identifying the research question**

We identified research questions that were broad but still specific enough to answer through a scoping review [19]. The questions related to the research gap emerged from initial searches
and had clinical and political relevance. The research questions addressed in this scoping review are as follows:

1) Which categories of approaches to engaging people with dementia in meaningful occupation in adult day care centres and residential care settings are described in the literature?

2) What characterizes the identified approaches to engage people with dementia in meaningful occupation?

Searching for relevant studies

The first author (KK) and two experienced research librarians met to develop a relevant search strategy embracing broadness but balancing specificity [18]. A systematic search was conducted by the research librarians in collaboration with KK in November to December 2017. The search was updated in December 2019. We searched the databases MEDLINE via PubMed, Embase, Scopus, Web of Science, CINAHL Complete, PsycINFO via Ovid, OT Seeker, SveMed+, and Cochrane Library. Through an analysis of the literature found in the first search, new keywords, which could improve the search, were identified. All the identified keywords were then included in the search, which was conducted as a systematic block search (see Table 1 for keywords/search string). We searched without limitations and included literature in English, Swedish, Norwegian and Danish. The search strategy was adapted to the chosen databases, e.g., by using truncation or subject headings when relevant. Covidence [20] and RefWorks [21] were used as tools to support the review process.

Table 1. Search string adapted to PubMed

| (((((((dementia) OR alzheimers) OR alzheimer's) OR alzheimer) OR cognitive impairment) OR cognitive impairments)) AND ((((((((("meaningful occupation") OR "meaningful occupations") OR "meaningful activity") OR "meaningful activities") OR meaningful everyday occupation) OR "everyday activities") OR "everyday activity") OR "valued activities") OR "valued activity") OR activities of daily living) OR daily activity) OR daily activities) OR occupation) OR everyday occupation) OR ADL))) AND (((((((dementia care) OR residential care) OR long term residential care) OR day care) OR Adult Day Care Centers) OR nursing home) OR activity program) OR activity programs))) AND (((((participate) OR participating) OR engage) OR engagement) OR engaging) OR engaged) |

Selecting studies

The study selection process is shown in the flow diagram (Figure 1). The database search identified 2233 records. After the removal of duplicates, we ended up with 1338 records to screen. Two authors (KK and HKK) individually screened all titles and abstracts of the studies against the research question and inclusion and exclusion criteria presented in Table 2. Contradictory assessments were discussed jointly, whereby agreement was reached. The process ended up with 254 records. Exclusion reasons were mainly different settings or other diseases than dementia. Afterwards, two authors independently assessed each of the 254 records for full-text eligibility based on the common criteria’s and post hoc discussions of these records. KK was consistent through this process and assessed all records. HKK, DN and SH assessed a third of the records each. KK met up with each of the other co-authors to
discuss the inclusion or exclusion of each study. Finally, 54 studies were included for data extraction, of which 11 were included after the updated search.

**Charting the data**

The data from included studies were extracted by the KK into a developed data charting form to record the characteristics of the studies, such as information on study design, content/description of the approach, findings and conclusions [18]. KK and HKK independently extracted data from the first five studies to assess and adapt the data charting form. KK extracted the rest of the data. Co-authors were continuously involved to reach consensus. The included literature are not critically appraised as it is not part of the method according to the scoping review methodology as “scoping reviews do not aim to produce a critically appraised and synthesised result/answer to a particular question, and rather aim to provide an overview or map of the evidence” [19 p.3].

**Collating, summarizing, and reporting the results**

As recommended by Levac et al. [18], this step consisted of two kind of analysis: a descriptive numerical summary of the characteristics of the included studies and a qualitative content analysis. The first was conducted by describing bibliometric characteristics, e.g., the overall number of included studies, type of study designs and publication year. Second, we performed a qualitative content analysis [22] to construct categories describing the type of approach and characteristics throughout the included data. KK read the extracted data as one text to obtain a sense of the whole. Then, the extracted data were given codes close to the text throughout the data and then compared for differences and similarities, and sub-categories were constructed. The sub-categories were then organized into broader categories according to similar characteristics. Finally, the categories were compared with the entirety of the text and discussed in relation to the research question with the co-authors until agreement upon the final categories were reached.

**Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria used as guidance for study selection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Inclusion criteria</th>
<th>Exclusion criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of participants</td>
<td>Persons diagnosed or assessed with any type of dementia living in long-term care homes or at home but attending a type of adult day program in an institutional setting.</td>
<td>Children and adolescents with cognitive disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of approaches</td>
<td>Any methods, theories, instruments/tools, workflows or interventions used to achieve meaningfulness through engagement. Definition of approach: a way of dealing with something: a way of doing or thinking about something: the act of moving or becoming near or nearer to someone or something: the act of approaching: an act or occurrence in which something comes nearer [23].</td>
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</table>
**Phenomena of interest**

Activities or occupations in everyday life that are considered meaningful or valued or that serve a similar function according to the study. Activities and occupations are understood as all the things people do across the sleep-wake continuum [24, 25]. Since both activity and occupation are used in the literature and often used interchangeably [25], we include both concepts.

**Types of studies**

All types of study designs or expert opinions

**Types of outcomes**

Studies that address the relation between meaningful occupation and the following outcome measures: quality of life, wellbeing, dementia quality of life.

Studies with a main focus on behaviour, independence or body functions

**Context and language**

Written in English, Swedish, Danish or Norwegian

Non-institutional settings

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**Ethical approval**

The study is approved by The Danish Data Protection Agency in accordance with x legislation (journal number 2015-57-0016-021). Ethical approval was not required due to prevailing rules. Consent was not relevant or required.
Results

The results aim to describe the characteristics of the identified approaches that facilitate engagement in meaningful occupations among people with dementia. The 54 included studies were published between 1997 and 2019 and draw on different disciplines and perspectives, such as nursing, occupational therapy, psychology and public health. Study designs were primarily qualitative (n=28), while 21 were quantitative and 5 were mixed-methods designs (Table 3). The content analysis resulted in four categories describing approaches and characteristics hereof, which are reported in Table 3 and described in the following sections. The categories are interconnected, and the content of some studies relates to several categories.

Description and understanding of meaningful occupation
A key characteristic across the studies was the varied use of the term meaningful activity or meaningful occupation within the literature on dementia care. Several (n=13) of the included studies lack definitions or explanations of the term or have a vague description (see table 3 for further information). For example, Ducak et al. [4] addresses the need of people with dementia to engage in meaningful occupations that support independence; the authors also provide directions to plan the occupations, but they do not define the term further. The absence of a consensus on the definition and measurement may cause variation in descriptions [3]. The term “meaning” encompasses many aspects and thereby refers to the concrete value connected to the experience of performing an occupation [27], as well as an existential feeling of finding meaning in life [28]. Contributions from different scientific and professional traditions may also cause variations. For example, Nyman and Szymbczynska [29] draw on developmental psychology, whereas Padilla [30] draws on occupational therapy theory.

**Theoretical and conceptual knowledge of meaningful occupation**

The literature in this category aims to provide theoretical and conceptual knowledge that underpins engagement in meaningful occupations. Some of the literature offer different insights into why occupations may be meaningful from the perspectives of people with dementia, family caregivers and day-care staff. People with mild dementia consider occupations to be meaningful when they experience being connected with self, others and the environment [1]. Furthermore, people with young-onset dementia added that occupations that provide a sense of usefulness are of importance, especially in the beginning of an illness course, while pleasant occupations are more engaging later on [31]. From interviews with people with mild dementia, Strandenæs et al. [32] found that day care centres was of great importance to the attendees’ experiences of having rhythm and structure in the daily life as well on enhancement of occupations. From a family caregiver perspective, stimulating occupations that maintain interest, joy and emotional and mental health are meaningful [5]. Likewise, caregivers emphasize occupations that keep people with dementia engaged outside the home, which may be difficult due to changes in identity and is a reason why support for caregivers is crucial [5]. Other authors also discuss the importance of support from staff to facilitate engagement in occupations and avoid a passive presence [28]. From a day-care staff perspective, staff should be skilled to fully engage people with dementia in occupations that lead to relative well-being [6]. Groenendaal et al. [33] suggest introduction guidelines to support maintenance of meaningful activities for persons with dementia especially during transitions from home to a nursing home.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed that several of the studies provide knowledge about how the term meaningful relates to other theoretical concepts. As mentioned above, engagement in meaningful occupation is a key factor related to enhancing: wellbeing; mental, physical and emotional health; and QOL [5, 6, 28]. Perrin [15] highlights that a truly individualized, person-centred approach to engage people with dementia in meaningful occupations leads to psychological wellbeing. However, it is crucial to understand the changes in the occupational needs of people with dementia and to obviate the deprivation of opportunities to facilitate their engagement in meaningful occupation. Similarly, the occupational identity of people with dementia may not or may, to a small degree, reflect their former identity, which is why it is important that staff are able to accommodate changes in occupational needs [15]. Du Toit et al. [14] concludes that
occupational opportunities should be extended beyond peoples life history to enhance engagement. Nyman and Szymczynska [29] contribute with another aspect of what makes occupations meaningful by stating that occupations should go beyond mere pleasure and should address psychological needs, such as the need for control, the continuation of creative thinking, the maintenance of relationships and coherence in one’s life story.

In addition to limited staff abilities, some of the studies emphasize that barriers to engagement in meaningful occupations lack environmental opportunities, for example, missing opportunities to engage in occupations in which one has interest and motivation or not being able to attend the provided occupations because of disabilities [34]. This finding suggests that people with dementia should participate in activity planning, and nursing homes should offer a variety of occupations that are desirable [34]. Furthermore, several studies [34-36] stress that promoting situations of meaningful occupation requires reflective planning, adjustments and evaluation.

**Approaches with specific themes**

This category consists of approaches that focus on facilitating meaningful occupations by providing knowledge on one specific subject, element, or method. The described subjects of meaningful occupations include art-making, singing groups or music-related occupations, all drawing on person-centred methods to engage the participants [37-39]. Another subject that is the focus of many of the studies is intergenerational occupations, where children or young people participate in common occupations that promote the development of friendships and increased self-esteem for people with dementia [40-42]. The implementation of intergenerational occupations requires occupations to be chosen that are meaningful and appropriate challenging for both generations. The Montessori method is presented as useful for this purpose [41]. Additionally, horticultural occupations were considered adaptable to many generations and possible to implement in many environments and as a group session [43, 44]. Further subjects, such as iPad games and computer-based occupation, were found to be engaging and valued leisure occupations, which may be a readily accessible occupation option and one that is possible to perform in a self-directed manner [45]. The focus on occupations promoting meaningful interaction between people with dementia in the later stages and their significant others is described by Cochran et al. [46]. It involves a structured activity programme that includes occupations that connect to past events, traditions and values.

Another type of approach in this category is literature focusing on a single element. An element is technology solutions as apps to maintain meaningful activities for people with mild dementia [47]. Benbow [48] presents various environmental elements with an impact on engagement in meaningful occupations among people with dementia and displays guidelines to design enabling care facilities. Another focus is making use of volunteers to engage people with dementia in personalized meaningful occupations [49]. A study found that it was feasible to train volunteers to facilitate engagement in personalized meaningful occupation for people with dementia who are considered behaviourally challenging and who otherwise would be at risk of social isolation [49]. A different subject of an approach is the focus on a method. An example of this is *errorless learning*, a rehabilitation method used to enable people with dementia to learn and relearn skills to become engaged in meaningful occupations [50].
Several of the studies include full descriptions of comprehensive programmes with the purposes of engaging people with dementia in meaningful occupation. The programme TimeSlips is a group-based storytelling intervention requiring people with dementia to draw upon their abilities of imagination and creativity rather than concrete facts or memories [51]. In line with this intervention, the programme Memories in the Making©, an art-making programme, was also developed to engage groups of people with dementia in engaging in creative occupations [52]. Another programme, the MemPics™ programme, improves meaningful engagement by emphasizing conversation in smaller groups of participants about familiar topics and events. In the programme, each participant is given a book with pictures that activate preserved old memories [3]. Namaste Care™ focus on occupations to people who are no longer able to perform complex occupations [53]. Reminiscence is also a focus of the intervention of spiritual reminiscence, where smaller groups of participants have similar levels of dementia. Group conversations are related to topics from a model of spiritual themes regarding the meaning of events and experiences in the lives of the participants, thereby engaging them in what is meaningful for the person [54].

**Multilevel approaches**

The content of this category is literature providing knowledge of multilevel approaches, meaning that it does not focus on a specific element or topic of an occupation but rather provides frameworks to facilitate meaningful occupation in general by drawing on several strategies and elements. Smith et al. [55] describe a holistic ‘whole-systems’ intervention called Active Residents in Care Homes (ARCH). The intervention focuses on the following: people with dementia perceptions of participation in meaningful occupations; staff skills to facilitate engagement; and social, cultural and physical environmental factors to support engagement in meaningful occupation. Likewise, the multilevel intervention The Enriched Opportunities Programme includes elements of staff training and leadership to implement methods of the intervention [56]. It also includes strategies to ensure that the occupations are meaningful and connected to the community [56]. The most recurring element in the multilevel approaches is the importance of tailored or person-centred occupations to ensure engagement and meaningfulness. This element encompasses tailoring occupations to interests, preferences, personality, functional abilities and life history to improve the level of engagement [12, 34, 57]. Occupation programmes focusing on person-centred approaches were organized in either one-to-one relationships or smaller groups, depending on the nature of the occupation and the individuals' preference [27, 34, 57].

The second consistent element concerns occupations that are appropriate in terms of demands and level of complexity [4]. Padilla [30] states that occupations should be modified by matching the clients’ skills and interests, and professionals should be trained in using compensatory strategies and cues adapted to the individual. The occupational level should also reflect the abilities of the people with dementia regarding the progress of the dementia illness. The Pool Activity Level instrument is recommended as a tool to assess an appropriate level as well as the occupational needs for different categories of occupations [13, 58]. The Montessori Methods for Dementia intervention includes, among other things, elements of the breakdown of tasks to facilitate the modification of the occupation to the abilities of the people with dementia [4]. Providing different types of occupation is also central, and it has been stated that wellbeing-enhancing occupations are seldom offered [59].

The third central multilevel element that may be a determining factor of the
achievement of meaningful occupations is environmental elements. Many of the articles underline the importance of environments that promote occupational possibilities or highlight how environments can be barriers to participation in meaningful occupation [11, 36]. The physical environment should be adapted to engage people with dementia in meaningful occupation, making the environment manageable, homely and encouraging for participation [11, 55, 59]. Additionally, the setting of appropriate light and sound must be taken into consideration [34]. Furthermore, social and cultural environmental features are highlighted, such as creating a culture to support the meaningful engagement of people with dementia and encouraging conversation [55]. Creating an error-free framework by focusing on the process of performing an occupation over the product may also be important [4]. The most significant factor throughout the literature regarding environmental elements seems to be the importance of caregiver or staff facilitation. Several studies suggest action learning or other training or educational learning sessions to assist with the implementation of meaningful activity programming [4, 55, 56, 59].

The fourth consistent element of the multilevel approaches incorporates the importance of the evaluation of the programmes or the provided occupations of focus. Dementia Care Mapping (DCM) is one proposed method to evaluate the meaningful occupation of people with dementia [60]. Likewise, Observing Quality of Life in Dementia (OQOLD) provides information guiding staff to support individuals in occupations that match their abilities and interests [61].

Table 3. Overview and characteristics of studies

The table shows the characteristics of the included studies and their categorization.

The black dots show the main focus(es) related to the type(s) of approach of the study. The white dots show a lack of definition/description of meaningful occupation. The study’s original use activity or occupation as concept is showed with an A or an O.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s), year, title</th>
<th>Objective/aim</th>
<th>Study design</th>
<th>Content of approach</th>
<th>C 1</th>
<th>C 2</th>
<th>C 3</th>
<th>C 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baker et al., (2017). Intergenerational Programs May Be Especially Engaging for Aged Care Residents With Cognitive Impairment: Findings From the Avondale Intergenerational Design Challenge</td>
<td>Aims to evaluate the outcomes of the Avondale Inter-generational Design Challenge (AVID)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>AVID connects technology students with aged care residents, for whom the students ultimately craft a personalized item based on the resident’s needs and preferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benbow, (2014). Design features for resident</td>
<td>Addresses certain environmental design issues</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Description of various objects, spaces and other environmental factors that</td>
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engagement and meaningful activity related to resident ‘engagement’ and creates guidance for the inducement of meaningful activities


Evaluates the effectiveness of the Enriched Opportunities Programme (EOP) intervention in improving the quality of life for people with dementia and related mental health problems living in five extracare housing schemes

The EOP encompasses a whole scheme approach including specialist staff role, leadership, staff training, individualised care-work, community liaison and the provision of activities

Byrne & MacKinlay, (2012). Seeking meaning: Making art and the experience of spirituality in dementia care

Explores how engaging in art-making relates to meaning and well-being in life as defined by older people with dementia living in care homes

Art-making groups

The facilitators used a person-centred facilitation throughout the sessions

Camic, Williams, Meeten, (2011). Does a 'Singing Together Group' improve the quality of life of people with a dementia and their carers? A pilot evaluation study

Aims to determine if participation in a community singing group had a positive impact on both people with a dementia and their carers

A singing group facilitated by a qualified community musician with expertise in group music-making and singing; the group met weekly over a period of 10 weeks.

Participants were asked about their interests and music preferences

Camp et al., (2004). Chapter: Effects of a Montessori-based...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Intergenerational Programming</th>
<th>Montessori Activities.</th>
<th>Participants were mapped in public areas in six-hour blocks with data on the following: 1. Domains of activity; 2. Mood-engagement values; 3. Episodes in which a care worker interacts with individuals in such a way as to potentially uphold their personhood or psychological needs; and 4. A narrative of the mapping period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campbell &amp; Davis, (2011). <em>The value of dementia care mapping in evaluation</em></td>
<td>Investigates the value of Dementia Care Mapping as part of the evaluation of the implementation of existing evidence on dementia-friendly environments</td>
<td>Activities involve familiar objects, are self-correcting and utilize procedural rather than declarative memory.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cochran et al., (2008). <em>Family ties: activities for family and significant others dealing with late stage dementia</em></td>
<td>Describes meaningful activities designed and implemented to provide staff support for informal caregivers as they visit their care recipients</td>
<td>A programme of structured events and activities selected to provide desirable and meaningful interaction between care recipients and their visiting family members by asking visitors about previous traditions and values.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conti, Voelkl, McGuire, (2008). <em>Efficacy of meaningful activities in recreation therapy on passive behaviours of older adults with dementia</em></td>
<td>Aims to test if individuals with dementia living in long-term care will demonstrate more alert behaviours during meaningful activities than during traditional nursing home activities</td>
<td>Intervention included a baseline treatment consisting of a traditional nursing home activity, specifically, bingo, provided in a small group setting. The randomly alternating treatments included a continuation of the baseline, namely, bingo provided in a one-to-one setting, and a one-to-one...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Summary</td>
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<tr>
<td>de Werd et al., (2013)</td>
<td><em>Errorless learning of everyday tasks in people with dementia</em></td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>Reviews and critically evaluates the effectiveness of errorless learning used for teaching meaningful activities of daily living to people with dementia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ducak, Denton, Elliot, (2016)</td>
<td><em>Implementing Montessori Methods for Dementia in Ontario long-term care homes: Recreation staff and multidisciplinary consultants' perceptions of policy and practice issues</em></td>
<td>Qualitative study</td>
<td>Explores the perceptions of recreation staff and multidisciplinary consultants on factors that affected the implementation of the Montessori Methods for Dementia (MMD) in long-term care homes (LTC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edelman, &amp; Ma, (2011)</td>
<td><em>Using technology to</em>* to-one meaningful activity unique to each participant</td>
<td>Feasibility study</td>
<td>Aims to develop a reliable, valid, useful and Montessori-based activities utilize the personalized learning principles originally created by Dr. Montessori and further developed by Dr. Camp to engage persons living with dementia through task breakdown and guided repetition, matching the demands of the activity to the abilities, skills and interests of the person.</td>
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</table>
maximize the quality of life of people with dementia in adult day centres, assisted living facilities and nursing homes

practical method of measuring the QOL of persons with dementia

are made in conjunction with activities, which are broadly defined to include activities of daily living as well as staff-facilitated small-/large-group activities and one-on-one-activities. The study describes the development of OQOLD and the evaluation of two pilot-tested technological enhancements to OQOLD on mobile devices


Examines what associations, if any, exist among an equine-assisted activities program (EAAP) and positive QOL experiences in comparison to other activity situations in a long-term care facility

Mixed method case study design. Therapeutic riding center staff partnered with trained horses to provide the EAAP. Residents could ride, groom and pet a horse, or stay seated and observe others’ involvement. The EAAP was found to help residents tap into and use a wide range of their existing capacities, interact intentionally with people and horses, and engage in more complex, multilayered activities than typical in their facility.

George & Houser, (2014). "I'm a storyteller!": Exploring the benefits of TimeSlips creative expression program at a nursing home

Examines the participant experience of a CE programme called TimeSlips, a group storytelling initiative developed in the 1990s for use with persons affected by mid- and late-stage dementia

Qualitative study. TimeSlips elicits improvisational performance of self in the present moment. A staged picture is distributed and facilitators encourage input from group members as a collective narrative is formed. Responses are woven into a story that is read back to the group periodically, creating a sense of community interaction, creativity, and self-worth
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gigliotti, Jarrott, Yorgason, (2004).</td>
<td>Harvesting health: effects of three types of horticultural therapy activities for persons with dementia</td>
<td>Experimental design</td>
<td>HT activities that have been adapted to meet the specific treatment goals of the population. Horticulture therapists utilize pre-planned activities and modifications in order to achieve appropriate benefits of functioning</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groenendaal et al., (2019).</td>
<td>Perspectives of healthcare professionals on meaningful activities for persons with dementia in transition from home to a nursing home: An explorative study.</td>
<td>Qualitative study</td>
<td>Providing personal meaningful activities for persons with dementia is a challenge for healthcare professionals and healthcare organizations. There is a lack of guidelines and interventions focusing on the transition from home to a nursing home for persons with dementia. Training of healthcare professionals can contribute to awareness of the importance of meaningful activities in the transition period</td>
<td>A &amp; O</td>
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<tr>
<td>Groenewoud et al., (2014).</td>
<td>iPad happy games for people with dementia as pleasant and meaningful activity</td>
<td>Observation study</td>
<td>The games included ten existing iPad games and three prototypes that had been especially designed for people with dementia</td>
<td>○ A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groenewoud et al., (2017).</td>
<td>Experiences of people with dementia playing causal games on a tablet.</td>
<td>Mixed-method design</td>
<td>There is potential for people with dementia to play casual games on a tablet as a pleasant and meaningful activity. It is important, that there is a match between the game, the touchscreen skills of</td>
<td>○ A</td>
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Synthesizes qualitative studies describing how people with dementia perceived meaningful activities, specifically to understand the types of activities and the underlying motivations.

Analysis indicated that persons with dementia want to engage in personally meaningful activities to be connected with self, with others, and with the environment. These findings support the premise that being connected is an important motivation for engagement in daily activities.

Aims to gain understanding of the staff experience of occupation in the context of day-care for persons with dementia.

Occupation was a gateway to relative well-being. The term occupational space was proposed to describe the three-phase phenomenon of bringing about engagement in one’s occupation and relative wellbeing. The term occupational place is suggested to name the actual engagement in occupation.

Analyses covariance procedure to test the relationship between the personality trait of agreeableness and engagement when activities are ideally tailored to ability and interest.

Tailoring meaningful activities for nursing home residents with dementia based on function as well as the personality traits of openness and extraversion may overcome the potentially negative effects of low agreeableness.

Aims to answer: How can the residents’

Residents appeared passive, playing the role of guests in the care.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Study Title</th>
<th>Study Type</th>
<th>Findings/Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Han et al., (2016).</td>
<td>Perspectives of People with Dementia about Meaningful Activities</td>
<td>Synthesizes qualitative studies</td>
<td>Analysis indicated that persons with dementia want to engage in personally meaningful activities to be connected with self, with others, and with the environment. These findings support the premise that being connected is an important motivation for engagement in daily activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasselkus, (1998).</td>
<td>Occupation and well-being in dementia: the experience of day-care staff</td>
<td>Aims to gain understanding of the staff experience of occupation in the context of day care for persons with dementia</td>
<td>Occupation was a gateway to relative well-being. The term occupational space was proposed to describe the three-phase phenomenon of bringing about engagement in one’s occupation and relative wellbeing. The term occupational place is suggested to name the actual engagement in occupation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill, Kolanowski, Kurum, (2010).</td>
<td>Agreeableness and activity engagement in nursing home residents with dementia</td>
<td>Analyses covariance procedure to test the relationship between the personality trait of agreeableness and engagement when activities are ideally tailored to ability and interest</td>
<td>Tailoring meaningful activities for nursing home residents with dementia based on function as well as the personality traits of openness and extraversion may overcome the potentially negative effects of low agreeableness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holthe, Thorsen, Josephsson, (2007).</td>
<td>Aims to answer: How can the residents’</td>
<td>Analyses</td>
<td>Residents appeared passive, playing the role of guests in the care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Title</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Action Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational patterns of people with dementia in residential care: an ethnographic study</td>
<td>occupational patterns in a residential care home in Norway be described, and how do the residents perceive the activities in which they participate?</td>
<td>Two facilitators developed and facilitated HT-based activities and were selected for anticipated therapeutic benefits. Activities were designed to support both individual and collective engagement. Facilitators encouraged social interaction and reminiscence</td>
<td>A model including an action plan: Facilitating staff to be reflective practitioners. Applying occupational therapy assessment tools, dementia friendly resources, changes in the environment, providing meaningful occupation and emphasizing sensory moments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jarrott &amp; Gigliotti, (2010). Comparing responses to horticultural-based and traditional activities in dementia care programs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aims to support activity programming for engagement of persons with dementia in meaningful activities</td>
<td>A tool designed for people with dementia that matches personal preferences and abilities with the specific features and types of apps in the self-management and meaningful activities domains. Supports people with mild dementia in using the relevant apps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kinney &amp; Rentz, (2005).</td>
<td>Observed well-being among individuals with dementia: Memories in the Making®, an art program, versus other structured activity</td>
<td>Provide a more methodologically rigorous evaluation of the extent to which Memories in the Making contributes to the affected person’s sense of well-being</td>
<td>Evaluation study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liapis &amp; Harding, (2017).</td>
<td>Meaningful use of computers has a potential therapeutic and preventative role in dementia care: A systematic review</td>
<td>Investigates and appraises the empirical evidence regarding the impact of meaningful computer use</td>
<td>Systematic review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low et al., (2015).</td>
<td>Grandfriends, an Intergenerational Program for Nursing-Home Residents and Preschoolers: A Randomized Trial</td>
<td>Aims to evaluate outcomes of Grandfriends</td>
<td>Randomized trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackenzie (2001).</td>
<td>Symposium on improving care of the elderly. Training to engage residents with dementia in activities</td>
<td>Aims to develop a programme for staff in nursing homes to engage people with dementia in meaningful activities that contribute to wellbeing and QOL</td>
<td>Action learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacKinlay &amp; Trevitt, (2010).</td>
<td>Living in aged care: Using</td>
<td>Aim to examine ways of supporting people with dementia to</td>
<td>Mixed-method</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>spiritual reminiscence to enhance meaning in life for those with dementia</strong></td>
<td>Indoor setting</td>
<td>The MemPics™ programme is a verbally based book series that emphasizes conversations about familiar topics that are likely to be preserved in spite of cognitive impairments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mansbach et al., (2017). Meaningful Activity for Long-Term Care Residents With Dementia: A Comparison of Activities and Raters</td>
<td>A comparison design</td>
<td>Requires a group educated facilitator</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Investigates if persons with dementia rated MemPics™ higher than other recreation activities in terms of meaningful activity, and if residents and staff have differing views on what make activities meaningful</td>
<td>MemPics™ program is a verbally based book series that emphasizes conversations about familiar topics that are likely to be preserved in spite of cognitive impairments</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>McNiel &amp; Westphal, (2018). Namaste Care™: A Person-Centered Care Approach for Alzheimer’s and Advanced Dementia.</td>
<td>Qualitative study</td>
<td>A sensory based program including individually designed sessions. It takes place in a tranquil room with lowered lighting, soft music, and aromatherapy. Namaste Care™ may be useful for individuals no longer able to participate in traditional long-term care setting activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explores the experiences of residents, staff, and family involved in the Namaste Care™ program at a long-term care facility</td>
<td>A sensory based program including individually designed sessions. It takes place in a tranquil room with lowered lighting, soft music, and aromatherapy. Namaste Care™ may be useful for individuals no longer able to participate in traditional long-term care setting activities</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moyle &amp; O'Dwyer, (2012). Quality of life in people living with dementia in nursing homes</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>The approach is ways of thinking about QOL. People with dementia are able to self-rate their quality of life and have meaning in their lives when key factors related to QOL are addressed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describes the impact of living in a nursing home on QOL and provides recommendations for further research</td>
<td>The approach is ways of thinking about QOL. People with dementia are able to self-rate their quality of life and have meaning in their lives when key factors related to QOL are addressed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Möhler et al., (2018). Personally tailored activities for improving psychosocial outcomes for people with dementia</td>
<td>Systematic review</td>
<td>Offering activity sessions to people with moderate or severe dementia have little or no effect on self-rated QOL. However, no evidence supported the idea that activities were more effective if they were tailored to people's interests.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investigates the effects of offering people with dementia who were living in care homes activities tailored to their personal interests.</td>
<td>Offering activity sessions to people with moderate or severe dementia have little or no effect on self-rated QOL. However, no evidence supported the idea that activities were more effective if they were tailored to people's interests.</td>
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### Literature Review

**Nyman & Szymczynska, (2016).**

*Meaningful activities for improving the wellbeing of people with dementia: beyond mere pleasure to meeting fundamental psychological needs*

Aims to connect existing initiatives to facilitate the participation of people with dementia in meaningful activities with psychological theory

**Literature review**

Meaningful activities have to meet psychological needs, such as the following: life review therapy and life story work, spiritual/religious activities, intergenerational activities, re-acquaintance with previously conducted leisure activities and pursuit of new leisure activities

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**Padilla, (2011).**

*Effectiveness of interventions designed to modify the activity demands of the occupations of self-care and leisure for people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias*

Aims to provide research evidence to inform practice and justify the use of interventions designed to modify the activity demands of occupations for people with Alzheimer’s disease

**Systematic review**

Approaches of strategies:

1. matching of client skills and interests,
2. use of cues,
3. compensatory and environmental strategies, including environmental modifications, caregiver training and adaptive equipment

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**Perrin, (1997).**

*Occupational need in dementia care: a literature review and implications for practice*

Reviews the existing literature on the occupational needs of people with dementia to identify some of the gaps and propose areas for further research

**Literature review**

A balance of different occupations is a prerequisite for physical and psychological health and wellbeing. They should be truly person-centred.

Caregivers need to be skilled assessors of the changes in the occupational identity and needs of individuals over
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s) and Year</th>
<th>Title/Description</th>
<th>Study Type</th>
<th>Aims/Promises/Promote/Support</th>
<th>Illustration</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roland &amp; Chappell, (2015).</td>
<td>Meaningful activity for persons with dementia: family caregiver perspectives</td>
<td>Qualitative interview study</td>
<td>Aims to understand how caregivers attribute meaning to activity participation outside the homes of people with dementia.</td>
<td>A ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixsmith &amp; Gibson, (2007).</td>
<td>Music and the wellbeing of people with dementia</td>
<td>Qualitative study</td>
<td>Examines the role of music and music-related activities in the everyday lives of people with dementia.</td>
<td>A ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skropeta, Colvin, Sladen, (2014).</td>
<td>An evaluative study of the benefits of participating in intergenerational playgroups in aged care for older people</td>
<td>Mixed methods study</td>
<td>Explores the benefits of participating in an intergenerational playgroup programme (IPP) in a care facility for ageing individuals.</td>
<td>A ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smit et al., (2014).</td>
<td>Wellbeing-enhancing occupation and organizational and environmental contributors in long-term dementia care facilities: an explorative study</td>
<td>Explorative study</td>
<td>Explores residents’ involvement in different occupations and its relation to wellbeing, as well as the characteristics of care facilities that might facilitate occupation among residents.</td>
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Promote activities for both caregivers and people with dementia. Support caregivers in enabling people with dementia to continue to participate in meaningful activity, thus improving the QOL of both parties. Activities related to individual interests lead to positive effects.

Music-related activities in the different settings of everyday lives. Music can enable people to participate in activities that are stimulating and personally meaningful.

The IPP is a diversional intergenerational therapy/leisure lifestyle programme offered in an aged care facility. The therapists facilitated interaction between the residents and the playgroup participants. The programme included structured and unstructured play and learning experiences.

Reminiscence, leisure, expression, and vocational occupation had greatest potential of enhancing wellbeing, but these types were seldom offered. Long-term care facilities with a more homelike atmosphere frequently provided “wellbeing-enhancing occupation”, supported social interaction through the environment, and had no
central activity programme

A qualitative study exploring therapists' experiences of implementing a complex intervention promoting meaningful activity for residents in care homes

Describes the Active Residents in Care Homes (ARCH) intervention and the evaluation methods

Innovative implementation study

Innovative implementation study

ARCH is an occupational therapy–led intervention which utilizes a holistic whole-systems approach to increase meaningful activities. Delivering the approach can be challenging for therapists. Care home interventions that require collaborative working between therapists and care staff should consider facilitating additional time prior to starting implementation to allow for relationship building and trust to develop.

○ A

○ A

Strandenæs, Lund, Rokstad, (2018). Experiences of attending day care services designed for people with dementia—a qualitative study with individual interviews.

Explores attendees’ experiences with day care designed for people with dementia

A qualitative study

Service users experience day care may have a positive impact on the lives because it contributes to the maintenance of a rhythm and structure and prevents isolation. The social setting, the meals, and the opportunity to leave the house are highlighted as enjoyable and preferred activities. The staff play a major role in how the day care is experienced by meeting their basic psychological needs with

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<th>Reference</th>
<th>Study</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strandenæs, Lund, Rokstad, (2019). <em>Facilitation of activities for people with dementia in day care: a qualitative study exploring the experiences of staff</em></td>
<td>Aims to gain understanding of the staff’s experiences on how to enhance engagement and participation in activities for attendees</td>
<td>A qualitative study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tak &amp; Tongumpun, (2015). <em>Activity Engagement: Perspectives from Nursing Home Residents with Dementia</em></td>
<td>Describes types of current activity involvement and barriers to activities reported by nursing home residents with dementia</td>
<td>A qualitative study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van der Ploeg, Walker, O’Connor, (2014). <em>The feasibility of volunteers facilitating personalized activities for nursing home residents with dementia and agitation</em></td>
<td>Explores the potential for the translation of individualized one-to-one activities into everyday practice with volunteers acting as facilitators</td>
<td>A descriptive feasibility review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Haitsma et al., (2015). <em>A randomized controlled trial for an individualized</em></td>
<td>Aims to test the effectiveness of individualized activities, led by certified nursing assistants, in</td>
<td>A randomized controlled study</td>
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</table>

Staff play an important role in promoting and facilitating activities to increase engagement and participation in activities. There is a potential for greater structured use of activities and cognitive stimulation. To avoid occupational injustice, decreased health and well-being, more differentiated and individual tailored services are needed.

People with dementia should be invited to participate in activity planning and have necessary assistance and accommodation in order to engage in activities that matter to them. A checklist for individualizing and evaluating activities for people with dementia is detailed.

The facilitator, in consultation with the family, developed a range of materials that were judged likely to engage the resident’s interest to match their cognitive, language and physical capacities. Volunteers were trained by experienced facilitator on the principles and practical application of Montessori-type activities

The Individualized Positive Psychosocial Intervention (IPPI). PELI-NH was used to collect information about the
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Findings/Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>van Vliet et al., (2017).</td>
<td>Feeling useful and engaged in daily life: exploring the experiences of people with young-onset dementia</td>
<td>A qualitative study</td>
<td>Explores the aspects of daily life that give people with young-onset dementia a sense of usefulness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wenborn et al., (2013).</td>
<td>Providing activity for people with dementia in care homes: a cluster randomised controlled trial</td>
<td>A cluster randomised controlled trial</td>
<td>The PAL Instrument is a carer-rated instrument that identifies the level of cognitive ability that an individual must have to engage in a particular activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wenborn, (2017).</td>
<td>The chapter discusses the key</td>
<td>Bookc haper</td>
<td>Provides knowledge of components in activity.</td>
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</table>
Meaningful activities

components to be considered when providing occupational opportunities for care home residents who have dementia

literature review provision as: educational models to equip care staff with enhanced knowledge and understanding of dementia, individualised care plans, adaptation of the environment and the significance of manager’s role and leadership style

Wood et al., (2005). Activity situations on an Alzheimer’s disease special care unit and resident environmental interactions, time use, and affect

Examines routine activity situations on an Alzheimer’s disease special care unit with respect to residents’ social and physical environmental interactions, time use, and apparent affect

An observational study Activity situations were conceptualized as environmental determinants of QOL created by the actions of facility-based care givers and other personnel, consisting of routinely occurring chunks of time characterized by opportunities to participate in some kinds of activities (but not others) by people with Alzheimer’s disease

Discussion

The studies included in this scoping review reflect the heterogenic field of approaches to engage people with dementia in meaningful occupations. Approaches stem from various disciplines and are thereby embedded in different perspectives and theoretical and conceptual knowledge. As demonstrated, the concept of meaningful occupations is described in various ways. However, it is sometimes only mentioned without further explanation. It seems possible that this result is due to a common-sense understanding of the concept within some healthcare professions and research traditions. Other disciplines view activities and meaning as central theoretical concepts; for example, occupational therapy assumes that engagement in occupations that are personally meaningful contributes to meaning and quality of life [2]. Likewise, meaning has been considered a key concept and discussed within the social sciences for years from psychological perspectives as well from philosophical standpoints [62]. For example, it was noted in one study [63] that meaning is contextual and ranges through a continuum in which self-perceived meaning is at one end and socially defined meaning is at the other end. Meaningful occupations are thereby often derived from certain theoretical assumptions and perspectives. This review included literature providing various perspectives on meaningful occupations from the viewpoints of people with dementia and informal and formal caregivers. Arguments that dementia is a disease affecting the wellbeing of caregivers, as well as the methodological challenges of gaining an understanding of the
subjective experience of people living with moderate to advanced dementia [5], calls for the inclusion of caregiver perspectives. Conversely, the perception of meaningful occupations from the perspectives of caregivers and those of people with dementia differ [1] on why a client-centred practice should include approaches building on the perspectives of people with dementia.

As demonstrated by this review, approaches also differed in their focus or topic. While some approaches were concerned with specific occupations, others had a more overall multilevel approach to meaningful occupations. The advantages of focusing on one topic, e.g., a specific occupation, might be the possibility of in-depth knowledge about the theoretical grounding and facilitation of that occupation. However, an understanding that one occupation can create meaning for everybody is challenged by the perspective that meaning should be addressed as it is experienced by the individual living in a specific context. Specific occupations may be inadequate to address situated meaning, as they miss the individual and situational aspects [64]. Another critique related to focus on specific occupations is that all occupations, even mundane everyday occupations, contain possible meaning [65]. This may support the notion that activity planning should consider the choice of occupations from the perspective of them not only being joyful or creative but also encompassing all kinds of occupations. This review suggests that occupational scientists and occupational therapists apply an occupational perspective [66] to deeply understand the meanings experienced by the individual and situated in the particular context when exploring engagement in meaningful occupation. Most of the studies we included have highlighted the importance of tailoring occupations to, among others, the capabilities of the individual. When this tailored approach is taken, the characteristics and length of the course of the illness are factors that should be taken into account. Perrin et al. [67] describe how occupations should be adjusted to the abilities of the person related to the progression of the dementia disease to enable participation. In the early stages of the progression of the disease, those with dementia can participate in group-related occupations with a goal-directed focus, whereas those in the later stages of dementia can participate in one-to-one relations and perform occupations with sensory stimulation [67]. Hence, occupational therapists may be important players in relation to organisation of activity programs, by providing knowledge based on task analysis and evaluation of the observed quality of occupational performance of the individual in a given environment. Because occupational therapists are skilled in applying occupation-based evaluation as performance analysis, and thereby focusing on enabling and hindering elements in the person’s performance context [68].

In addition to encompassing different types and adjusted occupations, some studies [55, 56] argue for the implementation of holistic and multilevel approaches when effective activity programmes are planned. This could reduce the risk of non-sustainable interventions through the use of approaches that include implementation strategies, with, for example, staff training, support from management, and adjustment of environments [56]. The results of this study highlight that tailoring occupations are important for the experience of meaning, which may be a challenge, as many activity programmes are planned as group sessions. This raises the question of to whom and under what conditions these groups will be rewarding. Cohen-Mansfield [69] notes that group activities can provide social interaction; however, in addition to this statement, Perrin [15] highlights that a person’s former and present preference of group activities should be taken into revision. Likewise, it may be difficult to address individualistic preferences on a group basis.
Methodological limitations

This scoping review was conducted with the purpose of searching broadly to map the extent of approaches to engage people with dementia in meaningful occupation. This broad purpose was a challenge during the search for and selection of studies, as it required knowledge of search words and repeated appraisal of inclusion and exclusion criteria. In particular, the varied use of “meaningful occupations/activities”, “quality of life” and “wellbeing” was challenging in the selection process. The concepts “activity” and “occupation” are both used within the literature, where some professions contributing to activity programming often make use of “activity”, occupational science and occupational therapy literature often uses the concept “occupation” to define all the things people do in their everyday life [24, 70]. For consistence, we have used “occupation” in the text of this study.

The criteria of connection to the outcomes of wellbeing or quality of life were crucial for the process, as many articles have focused on meaningful occupation in relation to behaviour or functions and were beyond the scope of this review. Applying an iterative and systematic procedure, as suggested by Levac et al. [18], seems important to balance relevance and breadth. Likewise, the rigor and transparency within the method lead to fulfilling the purpose of the study [19]. Additionally, collaboration with experienced research librarians might have strengthened the search technique.

The qualitative content analysis was found to be useful for summarizing the large amount of data into categories, which could encompass the similarities and differences of the included approaches. The analysis displayed characteristics of the included studies. However, it was not possible to include all the detailed descriptions of all the characteristics, given the constraints on journal length, and some may go unreported. 13 records, which were included in the process of screening title and abstract, were not further assessed due to limited access or language barriers, which may have limited the content of approaches. As this scoping review was meant to inform relevant members of the target audience by summarizing and disseminating findings, we have found that the method has achieved this purpose. This might support researchers identifying research gaps and displaying different approaches to occupational therapists, healthcare professionals and policymakers [19]. However, as we aimed to display an overview and the characteristics of approaches a quality assessment of the evidence was not performed in consistency with scoping review methodology. Implementation of specific approaches in practice will require the quality of literature to be appraised or evaluated.

Conclusion

This scoping review has applied rigorous and transparent methods to provide an overview of approaches supporting engagement in meaningful occupation for people with dementia. The results of the content analysis show that characteristics of approaches to engage people with dementia relate to four general categories, reflecting the heterogeneous nature of the studies. The term meaningful occupation is described differently in the dementia care literature, indicating that understanding meaningful occupation is complex. Hence, diverse use may challenge appraising and implementing different approaches to engage people with dementia in meaningful occupation. The second category of approaches provides theoretical insights on what makes occupations meaningful from different perspectives. A situated perspective of people with dementia can be difficult to achieve due to the disease, but is very important to
enable meaningful engagement in occupation. Therefore, literature about perspectives from people with moderate and advanced dementia is scarce. Third, a type of approach delivers in-depth knowledge on specific themes or single methods. Unlike a specific theme, the last category encompass approaches intervening on multiple and more general levels. Comprehensive multilevel approaches address several components in activity programming, including the preferences of people living with dementia, the advancement of professionals’ qualifications, support from management and the adjustment of the complexity of the occupation and the settings. On the basis of this review, we recommend that occupational scientists and occupational therapists collaborate with other professionals and policymakers engaged in activity programming within dementia care, and contribute with practical knowledge and theoretical perspectives of the connection between occupation and meaning.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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21. ProQuest LLC. RefWorks [Internet].


