

# Executive Functions and Participation – Associations and Differences among Children with and without Executive Functions' Deficits

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**Key words:** Children Participation Questionnaire (CPQ), Performance Skills Questionnaire (PSQ), executive functions tests

## Abstract

**Background:** Executive functions (EFs) are higher mental functions enabling complex goal-directed behavior, especially needed in new circumstances. Occupational therapists acknowledge their importance and develop intervention programs to support EFs. However, only a few studies assessed the correlations between EFs and children's participation. **Aims:** To study the differences in measures of participation between children with and without EFs deficit, and to explore the associations between measures of participation and EFs as measured by performance tests and parent- questionnaires. **Method:** Participants were 25 clinic-referred children with EFs deficit and 26 typically developing children (aged 6-10 years) and their parents. The parents completed three questionnaires pertaining to EFs, performance skills and participation. The children completed five executive performance tests. **Results:** The measures of participation for children with EFs deficits were lower than their peers. Low to moderate correlations ( $r=0.27-0.43$ ) were found between performance

tests and the measures of participation (diversity, frequency, independence, child's degree of enjoyment and parental satisfaction), and moderate to strong correlations ( $r=0.33-0.81$ ) between children's participation and performance skills questionnaire. **Conclusions:** EFs deficits may hamper children's participation in daily life occupations. Using performance tests in addition to parental questionnaires for EFs, performance skills and participation helps occupational therapists to accomplish a comprehensive multidimensional evaluation of executive functions and their contribution to child participation in his daily life activities.

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## Access to Occupational Therapy Services for Ethiopian Immigrants - A Needs Assessment for Project Development

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**Key Words:** Ethiopian community, immigration, occupational science, cultural competence, occupational injustice

### Abstract

**Background:** The 'healthy immigrant effect' refers to a situation in which the health of immigrants is satisfactory upon arrival but declines during integration into western culture. This suggests that Ethiopian immigrants are at high risk for poor health. Research relating to the health services consumption among Israeli Ethiopians found underutilization, due to inaccessibility of services. It is

therefore incumbent upon us to promote the health of Israeli Ethiopians. The aim of this paper is to describe the needs assessment process that led to determining gaps and suggested resolutions for improved occupational therapy services for Ethiopian immigrants. **Method:** The needs assessment included a literature review, discussions with policy makers, and surveys for Ethiopian immigrants (N=54) and for occupational therapists (N=71). **Survey results:** The survey results found that the main obstacle (60%) for occupational therapists in treating an Ethiopian patient is the lack of the patients' knowledge of occupational therapy services. In addition, 55% of the respondents noted difficulty in completing standardized assessments and in determining treatment goals due to different cultural and linguistic background. The Israeli Ethiopians survey found that 75% of the respondents indicated that health services in general were inaccessible. In addition, 70% of respondents were not aware of occupational therapy services. **Conclusions:** The needs assessment demonstrated the necessity of improving the accessibility of occupational therapy services to Ethiopian immigrants as well as increasing knowledge and awareness of Ethiopian culture among occupational therapists. As a results of these findings two lectures were developed; One for occupational therapists about the Ethiopian culture, and the other for the Israeli Ethiopian community, a radio program discussing occupational therapy services. Expected clinical implications: An increase in referrals to occupational therapy services among Ethiopian immigrants, as well as more effective occupational therapy intervention for this population is anticipated.

**The main message:** A. We found a lack of knowledge and awareness among Israeli Ethiopians regarding the uniqueness and range of occupational therapy services. B. Due to a knowledge gap, occupational therapists find it difficult to perform assessment and treatment relevant to Israeli Ethiopians. C. Occupational therapists and Israeli Ethiopians demonstrate a lack of knowledge regarding health care services accessibility.

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