



**SAMAL ALGILANI** is a registered nurse with a MSc in health care science and psychiatric care. She has worked in many fields but mainly in psychiatric care. In May 2012 she began her doctoral studies at the *Nutrition and Physical Activity Research Centre* (NUPARC) of Örebro University. NUPARC is a multidisciplinary research centre with focus on optimal functionality and gut health among older adults. The doctoral programme at NUPARC has a problem based learning approach.

The overall aim of this thesis was to explore the concept of optimal functionality among older adults and the possibility of developing an Internet Communication Tool (ICT) -platform to measure it. Throughout the thesis descriptive and explorative designs have been used. The data have been analysed with qualitative content analysis (studies I, II and IV) and a phenomenological approach (study III). The first study initially explored optimal functionality revealing that it comprised three major cornerstones: Body-related factors, Self-related factors and External factors. Building on that, the second study extended the understanding of optimal functionality yielding several new factors, but it also revealed a lack of discussion regarding the mental aspect. Consequently, the third study was performed in order to further explore the mental aspect in relation to optimal functionality. The study identified three syntheses: life situations affecting mental health, consequences of mental health and strategies to maintain good mental health, all impacting the ability to function as optimally as possible. The fourth study revealed that older adults possess the capability to use an ICT-tool and that the implementation of factors identifying functioning as optimally as possible in an interactive technical device is feasible in the near future. Additionally an ICT-tool can facilitate the measurement of optimal functionality.

Optimal functionality is holistic, subjective, and dynamic. It is applicable to all older adults despite health status or age. Identification of the factors involved can help the older adults on their path to health. Identification of these factors can be facilitated with an ICT-tool. With the identification of the factors for optimal functionality, the measurement of it can eventually also be possible, making the attainment of it something all older adults can experience.

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SAMAL ALGILANI "To be at one's best"

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Doctoral Dissertation

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### The evolution of Optimal Functionality and its possible implementation in an ICT-platform

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*Care Science*