



"To be at one's best"

The evolution of optimal functionality and its possible implementation in an ICT-platform

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Abstract

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At the Nutrition and Physical Activity Research Centre for Optimal Health and Functionality through Life (NUPARC), a research gap was uncovered regarding the concept optimal functionality based on the older adult’s own perspective. **The overall aim** was to explore the concept of optimal functionality among older adults and the possibility of creating and developing an ICT-platform to measure it. **Method:** An existing cohort from NUPARC was used for recruitment in studies **I-III** and to some extent study **IV**. A scoping study design and framework was adopted for the inclusion of the articles in Study **I**. Study **II** had a descriptive design. Six focus group discussions were conducted and analysed using qualitative deductive content analysis to extend the qualitative understanding. Study **III** used a phenomenological approach describing the experience of mental health and its impact on the ability to function as optimally as possible. Six interviews were analysed using Giorgi’s phenomenological approach. Study **IV** was a feasibility study and included 8 older adults using an ICT-platform for a period of four weeks. **Results:** Optimal Functionality comprises three major corner stones: Body-related factors, Self-related factors and External factors (**I**) accompanied by nine aspects, and according to older adults it is a matter of functioning as optimally as possible (**II**). The three major cornerstones are intricately linked and all but the mental aspects were included in the discussions (**II**). Life situations affecting mental health, consequences of mental health and strategies for maintaining good mental health were described by older adults as having an impact on mental health and affecting their ability to function as optimally as possible (**III**). The older adults managed the usage of an ICT-tool well and it was perceived as meaningful (**IV**). **Conclusion:** Optimal functionality is holistic, subjective, dynamic and applicable to all older adults. Identification of the factors involved can help the older adults on their path to health. An ICT-platform can facilitate the identification of the factors for optimal functionality and the eventual measurement of it.

Keywords: older adults, optimal functionality, scoping review, focus group, qualitative content analysis, mental health, interviews, phenomenological approach, ICT-platform

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