

8-2-2024

The Role of Occupational Therapy & Postpartum Care

Paula A. Rodriguez

Nova Southeastern University, pr781@mynsu.nova.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/hpd_ot_capstone

 Part of the [Occupational Therapy Commons](#)

All rights reserved. This publication is intended for use solely by faculty, students, and staff of Nova Southeastern University. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, now known or later developed, including but not limited to photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the author or the publisher.

NSUWorks Citation

Paula A. Rodriguez. 2024. *The Role of Occupational Therapy & Postpartum Care*. Capstone. Nova Southeastern University. Retrieved from NSUWorks, . (144)
https://nsuworks.nova.edu/hpd_ot_capstone/144.

This Entry Level Capstone is brought to you by the Department of Occupational Therapy at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Department of Occupational Therapy Entry-Level Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.



The Role of Occupational Therapy & Postpartum Care

Paula Rodriguez, OTD-S
Nova Southeastern University, Kim Rose OTD, OTR/L

Introduction

- The Scale of Occupational Disruption (SOD) is an instrument that was created by Dr.Carrasco to assess the way occupations are disrupted after a life-altering event.
- The SOD has been used across various populations including populations affected after COVID-19, veterans, and athletes.
- The postpartum period is known as the first few months after childbirth, which is an intense time of physical and emotional change for many women.
- Data was collected using the SOD in order to further validate this tool & to provide an opportunity for advocacy for the role of occupational therapists (OTs) and postpartum care.

Capstone Site Description

- Nova Southeastern University, Tampa Bay Regional Campus
- Focus Area: Research & Education

Summary of Needs Assessment

- Research studies often focus on one single occupation that is disrupted, such as eating or sleeping.
- In recent years, there has been an increase in the advocacy of the need for occupational therapy in postpartum care, however it continues to be a very niche area of practice.
- Occupational therapists have the education to assist with the postpartum period through different ways including assisting with sleep hygiene, helping mothers create new routines, and even through additional certifications like lactation consultation (AOTA, 2020). According to the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process-Fourth Edition, all of these fall within the scope of practice for occupational therapy.
- Furthermore, occupational therapists can also work in pelvic floor therapy, where there may be more access to working with new moms.



Figure 1: Participant Recruitment Flyer

Literature Review Summary

- The postpartum period begins after the birth of the baby and lasts at least six to eight weeks after delivery (Lopez-Gonzalez & Kopparapu, 2022).
- On average, a newborn will typically wake up every 3 hours to eat and may even have their day & night times confused (Stanford Medicine Children's Health, 2023).
- Following birth, there may also be limiting factors to the mother's time spent for self-care, including complications during the postpartum period, involving secondary challenges from birth including hemorrhaging, incontinence, pain, hypertension, and depression (Paladine et al., 2019).
- Occupational therapists have the opportunity to support a mother's breastfeeding journey by modifying the environment to establish facilitation for the mother and implementing performance patterns, including routines (Pitonyak, 2014).
- The World Health Organization states that approximately 13% of women struggle with postpartum depression during the first year of their baby's life (World Health Organization, 2017).



Capstone Project Description

- 142 participants were recruited to complete an anonymous survey through RedCap. Inclusion criteria included being at least 18 years old, English speaking, and giving birth within the last year. Of the 142 participants, 117 completed the survey completely. The mean age for the participants was approximately 30.5 years old.
- The SOD uses a likert scale, ranging from 1 (no disruption) to 5 (extreme disruption) to create a rating of how disrupted an occupation may be following a life-altering event.
- The 3 most reported disrupted occupations included the ability to participate in hobbies, community activities, and time spent with others.
- The 3 least reported disrupted occupations included the ability to engage in school work, ability to engage in spiritual or religious activities, and lastly to engage in work or earn income.

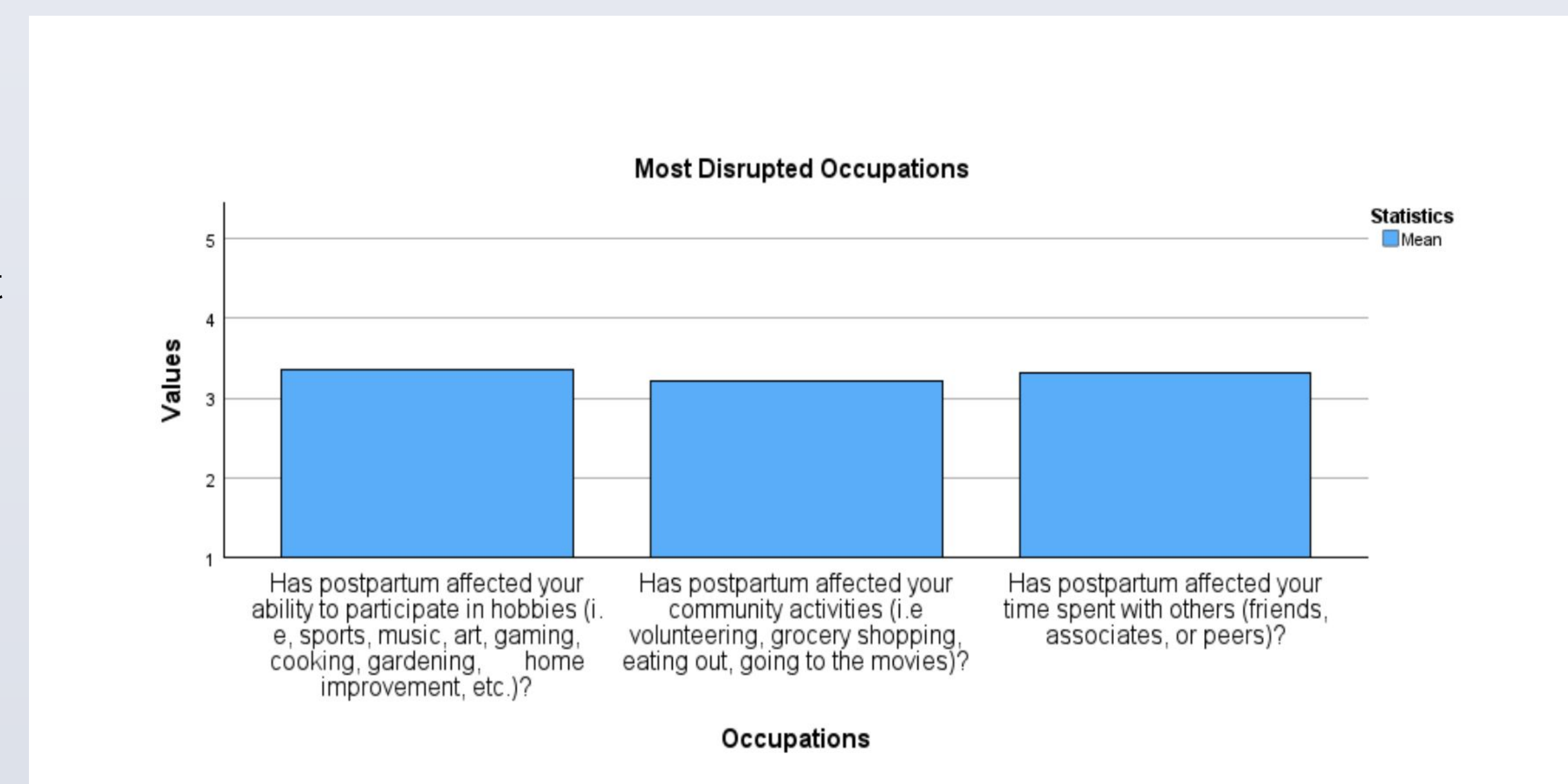


Figure 3: Top 3 reported disrupted occupations

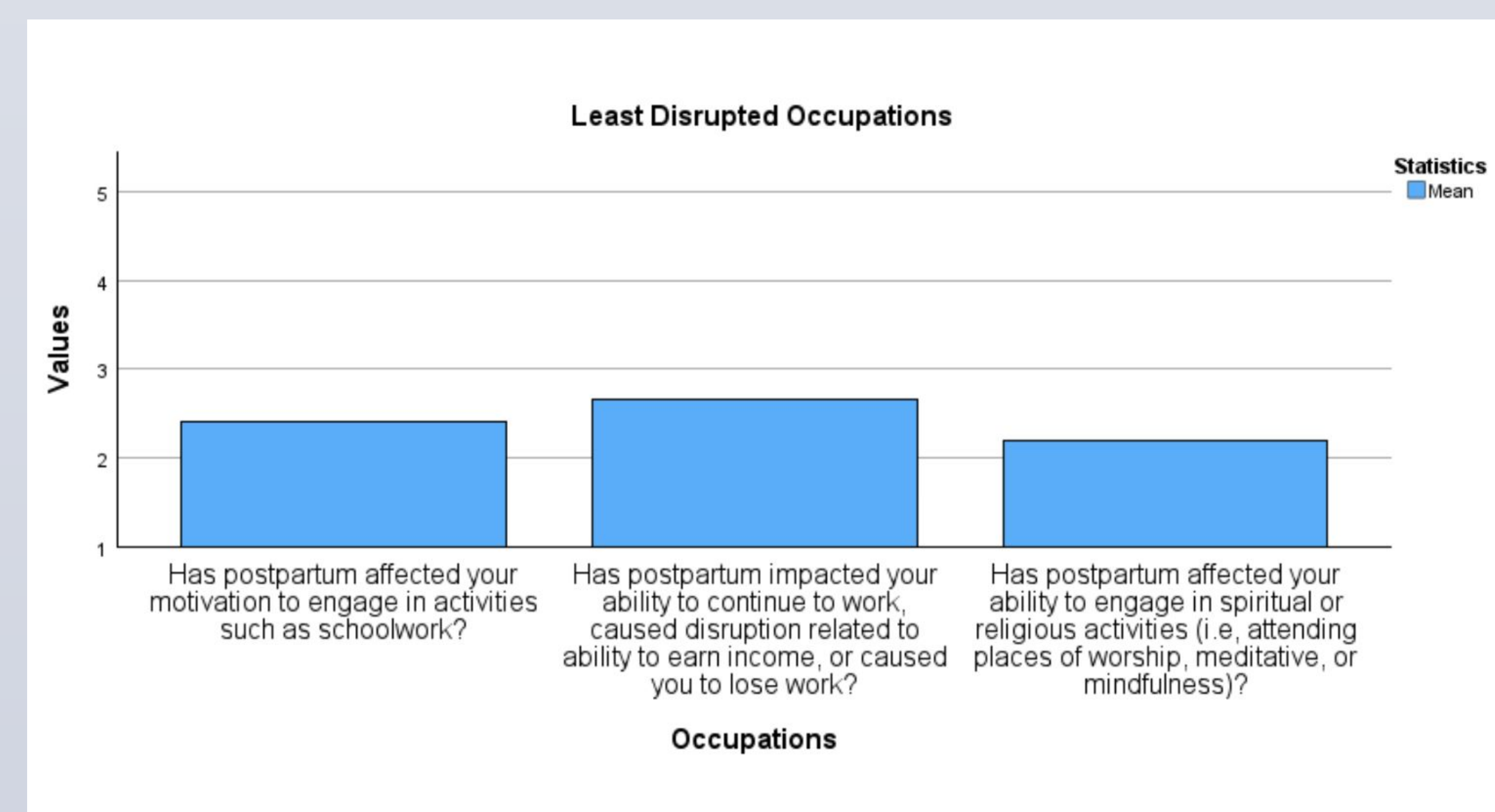


Figure 4: Bottom 3 reported disrupted occupations

Statistics		
Age (years)		
N	Valid	117
	Missing	0
Mean		30.53
Median		30.00
Mode		27 ^a
Std. Deviation		4.642
Range		21

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

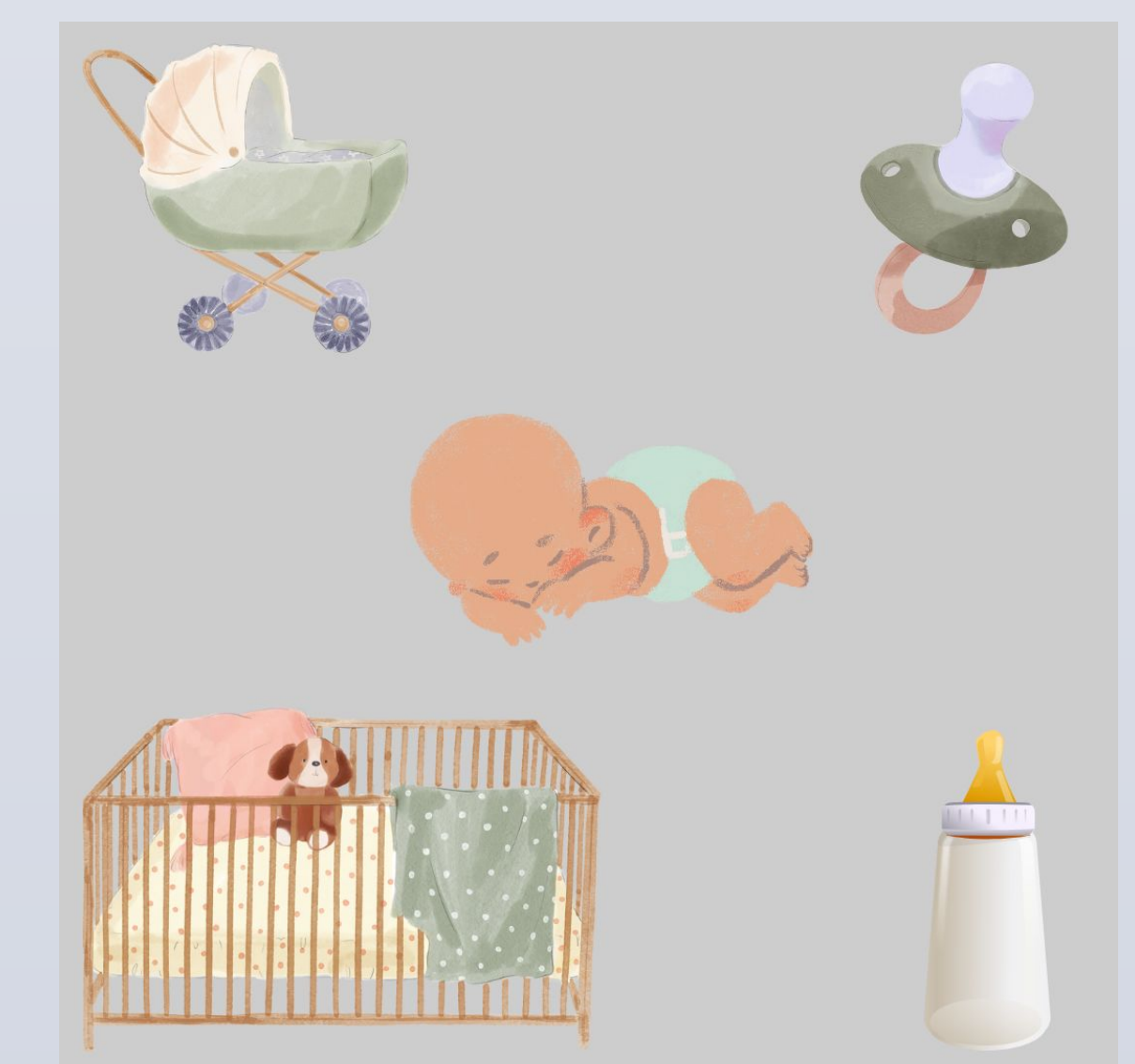
Figure 2: Descriptive Data

Capstone Goals Achieved

- Recruited 142 research participants through social media for capstone project.
- Completed a research study examining occupational disruption in new mothers using the SOD.
- Provided new population used for the SOD to further validate instrument.
- Gained understanding and experience in the role of a faculty member through assisting with a first-year OTD course through grading, leading discussions/activities, and providing students with perspective on experience throughout the program.

Implication for OT Practice

- Through the educational and clinical experiences, OTs have experience in anatomy, physiology, mental health, childhood development, and may even have experiences allowing for speciality practice areas, like pelvic floor therapy.
- OTs can also choose to specialize in certifications such as a certified lactation consultant (CLC), where even further breastfeeding education and support can be learned.
- The top 3 most disrupted occupations reported through the SOD mainly have to do with engagement in activities with others and hobbies. OTs can help promote health routines and habits, as well as encourage positive mental health.
- Studies, such as this one, allow for further advocacy on why the role of occupational therapy & postpartum care is important. We can advocate to collaborate with labor & delivery or postpartum nurses, OBGYNs, NICU nurses, and other medical professionals.



REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

References Available Upon Request

I would like to express my gratitude for my mentor, Dr.Rose, for her guidance and knowledge throughout my capstone experience and her continuous support for my research project. I would also like to thank Dr.Carrasco for allowing me to use the SOD in my capstone project, and guidance on how to use this tool for this population.