

Global forum on **NURSING CARE AND ADVANCED NURSING**

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Smoking: A valued occupation to young people experiencing symptoms of mental illness(?)**Akkara Lionel Jose***University of Worcester, England*

Objectives: 1) Identify reasons young people experiencing symptoms of mental illness smoke 2) Explore and contribute to current literature on smoking cessation and Dark Occupations. 3) Identify occupational value of smoking among this demographic group.

Background: "Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the UK" (Office for National Statistics, 2018); The health impact of smoking is a major public health concern across the UK and a shared agenda of the International world (WHO, 2017). Despite this increased public awareness, smoking remains common among young people with mental health conditions. A critical review of the literature explored smoking and its value to mental health clients from an occupational perspective including domains of "Doing, Being, Becoming and Belonging" (Wilcock & Hocking, 2015). This presentation is based on an in-depth qualitative study of three young smokers who attended a Social and Interpersonal skills intervention programme for young people Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET). The study explored reasons why young people with mental illness smoke, with an underlying focus on understanding the perceived value smoking has as an occupation to this group of young people. Utilising Twinley's (2012) definition of dark occupations, the study outlines both the positive and negative effects of smoking for socially disadvantaged young people, providing an evidence base to inform smoking interventions developed by practitioners.

Methodology and Methods: An Interpretivist paradigm was adopted, employing the use of semi-structured interviews to gain subjective perceptions. The semi-structured interview style allowed flexibility for participants' to discuss their value of smoking. Participants consisted of 3 young people aged 20-23 currently experiencing mental health symptoms. In order to enhance the quality of subjective material gained an Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA) has been applied, complimented by a thematic analysis of data collected. IPA allowed for more flexibility during the research, bypassing the views of the researcher and making it that of the individual's while allowing the researcher to delve deeper and ask further questions (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The flexible nature of IPA produced an overtly in-depth discussion, contributing to the interpretation process rather than the analysis. A thematic analysis therefore allowed for further scrutiny of the data, narrowing down our results.

Findings: The study enhances our understanding of why individuals smoke and identifies gaps in understanding reasons for engagement among this specific demographic. Four sub-themes emerged from the IPA interpretation process: 1) The First Smoke; 2) Motivators to Smoke – Triggers, Social and Family Motivators; 3) Coping Strategies and Individualised benefits of smoking; 4) Occupational Significance to smoking. Further thematic analysis narrowed the results to three main reasons for young people with mental health conditions to continue to smoke; 1) Social Drivers; 2) an Increased Occupational Significance (i.e. participation and performance); 3) use as a coping strategy.

Conclusion: While the health impacts of smoking should not be ignored, the compelling reasons for smoking need to be acknowledged for young people with mental health conditions, who may have limited alternative coping strategies and lack social engagement opportunities.

Biography

Lionel is a promising young graduate who acquired his Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Occupational Therapy from the University of Worcester, England in 2017 aged 20. He is currently pursuing his PhD at Queen Margaret University, Scotland researching environmental features and participation related factors among people living in mental health rehabilitation settings. Lionel has also published a systematic review in the international journal of psychiatry as part of his PhD thesis. Lionel has a heightened interest in youth mental health and has spent most of his career working with disadvantaged young people.