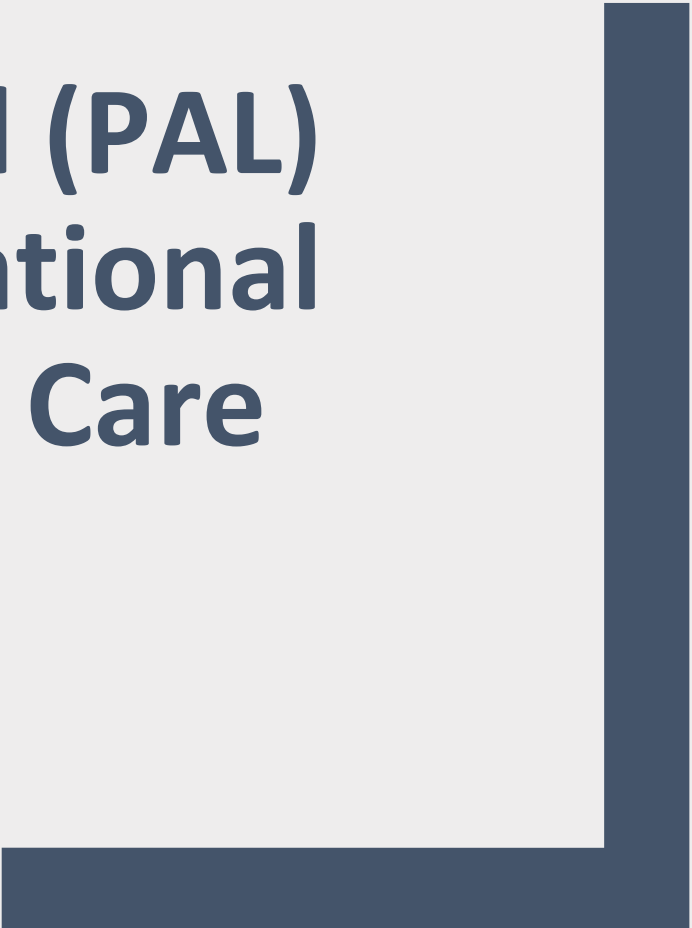




The Pool Activity Level (PAL) Instrument for Occupational Profiling in Dementia Care

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Overview

- The purpose of the PAL

- Underpinning principles

- The PAL Tools

- The PAL Levels

- Purpose of study

- Participants

- Results and Findings

- Conclusion

The Pool Activity Level (PAL)

- Developed by Jackie Pool
- A widely used framework in care settings across the UK
- Proven reliability and validity (Wenborn et al., 2008)
- Standardized assessment and outcome measure
- Recommended for skills training and activity planning (NICE, 2006)

The purpose of the PAL instrument

- Enable carers to engage people with dementia in meaningful activities
- To be applicable in the home, day service or residential facility
- To be integrated in to day-to-day care provision
- Provide information on individual's strengths and abilities
- Ensure activities are meaningful and appropriate

Underpinning principles

- People with cognitive impairment have abilities
- In an enabling environment, these potential abilities can be realised
- Activity is the key to unlocking this potential
- The persons' impairments and abilities must be understood
- Activities must have personal significance.

The PAL Consists of:

1. Bathing/Washing	P	E	S	R
• Can bathe/wash independently, sometimes with a little help to start				
• Needs soap put on flannel and one-step-at-a-time directions to wash				
• Mainly relies on others but will wipe own face and hands if encouraged				
• Totally dependent and needs full assistance to wash or bathe				

Life History Profile - Gathers information on the persons life history, likes, dislikes, routines etc.

PAL Checklist - Determines the persons current level of engagement

PAL Activity Profile - Provides information on persons likely abilities, limitations, the caregivers role and suitable leisure activities

Individual Action Plan – A record of information regarding the individuals current needs, preferences and routines in meaningful activities

Pool Activity Levels:

- Planned
- Exploratory
- Sensory
- Reflex

Ability to engage in
activities:



Planned Activity Level

P

Can work towards goal directed activities with a tangible outcome, but may not be able to solve problems that arise in the process.

To facilitate participation:

- Keep sentences short
- Be present to help to solve problems that arise
- Focus on activities that achieve a tangible result



Exploratory Activity Level



Can carry out familiar activities in familiar surroundings, but is more concerned with the experience than the end result.

To facilitate participation:

- Make first contact
- Use simple, understandable instructions
- Use a creative and spontaneous approach
- Break the activity into manageable chunks



Sensory Activity Level



Primarily concerned with experiencing the sensation of the activity and moving their body in response to those sensations.

To facilitate participation:

- Guide to carry out single-step activities
- Ensure the person experiences a wide variety of sensations
- Give simple directions and reinforce with demonstrations



Reflex Activity Level

R

Maybe unaware of surrounding environment or own body. Movement is generally a sub-conscious, reflex response to direct sensory stimulation.

To facilitate participation:

- Use direct sensory stimulation to raise self awareness
- Don't over-stimulate
- Use single-word commands
- Use facial expressions and tone of voice



Example: Baking Activity



- **Planned:** Able to carry out full task with some assistance solving problems
- **Exploratory:** Can carry out 2-3 step parts of the process
- **Sensory:** Can carry out single step activities. May require demonstration
- **Reflex:** Can smell, taste and feel the individual ingredients and end product.

Research Study:

The effectiveness of the Pool Activity Level (PAL) Instrument for Occupational Profiling:
Clinician and Carer Perspectives

Purpose

- Find out how it's being used within this particular setting
- Explore perspectives on the value of the PAL
- Indicate potential for it to become more widely used

Participants

- Occupational Therapist
- Community Liaison Nurse
- Caregiver
- Allied Health Assistant
- x2 Inpatient Registered Nurses

Use of the PAL

- Used with all dementia patients
- PAL Checklist completed after two weeks
- Checklist and Profile put in the notes
- Useful when staff are struggling to work with the person
- Educational tool
- Outcome measure

Strengths of the PAL Instrument

- Easy to use
- Cost and time effective
- Strengths-focused
- Outcome measure
- Assists with planning care
- Facilitates person-centred care

"It is so simple to learn and quick to administer and use"
Occupational Therapist

"I find the tool very easy to understand, its easy to use, its short. Yeah, I like it."
Community Liaison Nurse

Limitations of the PAL Instrument

- Level of cultural sensitivity
- Open to interpretation
- Only four levels
- Not relevant to all client groups

“On the one hand it is putting people into, you know, pigeon holes, but just the way its worded. It still gives you that range and it helps you think more clearly about why certain patients can’t do things”

Caregiver

Value of using the PAL for patients

- Supports independence and individuality
- Enhances wellbeing and quality of life
- Maintains function
- Reduces distress/agitation
- Care is at the appropriate level
- Feelings of satisfaction and achievement

“The benefit of it, oh amazing. Cause they, then they don’t get frustrated. They feel like they are getting instructions that they can comprehend. Not something that their not going to comprehend and you may as well be talking Japanese!”

Inpatient Nurse

Value of using the PAL for clinicians/carers

- Changes the way they work
- Sense of achievement/satisfaction
- Enhances client-carer relationship
- Involves the caregiver
- Can show deterioration
- Improves consistency with staff

"So rather than treating them either below, which would be condescending, or above which would be confusing, its actually at their level so their response should be, positive, really."

Inpatient Nurse

"I love it!because its basically showing the caregivers, its all there in black and white. They are doing the assessment, they know the person, they are putting it on paper and they can see the outcomes. They can see how if you work differently with a person it works!"

Community Liaison Nurse

Barriers to using the PAL

- People don't know what it is
- Not always receptive to new documentation
- Remembering the levels
- Time
- Not enough follow up
- Caregivers don't look at the notes
- Culture that nurses do the assessments

"My biggest challenge is to have the registered nurses accept that the caregivers can actually do that assessment. That's my biggest challenge"
Community Liaison Nurse

"Staff will say they've not got time to use it possibly. But, obviously once they understand it and if they are using it then ultimately they will save caregiver time because they have to give less assistance. But, until they are really familiar with it, people don't understand that."
Occupational Therapist

Implementation of the PAL

- Should be used more widely in NZ
- Tipping effect
- Basic training/education and follow up
- Get everyone involved and on board
- Effort needed to maintain it
- Practical strategies

“Have a look at it, and give it a go! Try it.
Don't be frightened to use something
different ”

Community Liaison Nurse

*“It’s one of the best things that I’ve found
working in this sector and it seems such a
simple to use tool that I find it really
surprising that its not really widely used in
New Zealand. It doesn’t take long to learn it
and once you know it, it can just make such a
difference.”*

Occupational Therapist

Conclusion

- The PAL was valuable for those who used it
- Barriers to using the PAL were noted
- There is potential for it to be used more widely in NZ

References

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