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Review Article

Racism and anti-racism in occupational therapy practices: a scoping review protocol

Racismo e antirracismo nas práticas de terapia ocupacional: um protocolo de revisão de escopo

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Abstract

Introduction: Worldwide, the life of the Black population is marked by racism and different forms of violence that have negative effects on their daily occupations, as well as impact their subjectivity, their ways of being in the world, their identity, and social relationships. **Objective:** The scoping review protocol aims to describe the theoretical and methodological frameworks that guide the practices of occupational therapy practitioners who provide services to Black populations. **Methods:** The JBI methodological framework for scoping reviews will be adopted for this scoping review. A search strategy was designed in collaboration with a health sciences librarian based on titles and abstracts of relevant articles. A 3-step search strategy consisting of an initial limited search, a full search, and a screening of the reference lists of all included articles will be undertaken. Databases such as CINAHL (EBSCOhost), MEDLINE (PubMed), PsycINFO (EBSCOhost), LILACS (BIREME/PAHO/WHO), SCIELO, Web of Science, and Scopus will be searched to identify relevant full-text articles, including original research, editorials, and opinion articles. **Inclusion criteria:** Peer-reviewed articles published in Portuguese and English between the years 2013 and 2024 will be included. Two reviewers will screen sources and extract data using a tool that will be modified, and revised, as necessary. The data will be presented using diagrams, tables and/or word clouds, accompanied by a narrative summary. Quantitative and qualitative analyses, through description and categorization, will accompany the mapped results, correlating them to the objective and research question of the scoping review. The approach recommended by JBI for study selection, critical evaluation, data extraction, and data synthesis will be used.

Keywords: Racism, Occupational Therapy, Black population, Culture.

Resumo

Introdução: Mundialmente a vida da população negra é marcada pelo racismo e por diferentes formas de violência que repercutem negativamente em suas ocupações, bem como impactam sua subjetividade, seus modos de estar no mundo, sua identidade e relações sociais. **Objetivo:** O objetivo deste protocolo de revisão de escopo é descrever os referenciais teóricos e metodológicos que orientam as práticas de terapeutas ocupacionais com a população negra. **Métodos:** As diretrizes de revisão de escopo do JBI para revisões de escopo serão adotadas. Uma estratégia de busca foi desenhada em colaboração com a bibliotecária da área das ciências da saúde com base em títulos e resumos de artigos relevantes. Será realizada uma estratégia de pesquisa em três etapas que consiste em uma pesquisa inicial limitada, uma pesquisa completa e uma triagem das referências de todos os artigos incluídos. Bases de dados como CINAHL (EBSCOhost), MEDLINE (PubMed), PsycINFO (EBSCOhost), LILACS (BIREME/PAHO/WHO), SCIELO, Web of Science e Scopus serão pesquisados para identificar artigos relevantes em texto completo, incluindo pesquisas originais, editoriais e artigos de opinião. **Critérios de inclusão:** Serão incluídos artigos revisados por pares publicados em português e inglês entre os anos de 2013 e 2024. Duas revisoras selecionaram as fontes e extraíram os dados usando uma ferramenta que será modificada e revisada, conforme necessário. Os dados serão apresentados por meio de diagramas, tabelas e/ou nuvens de palavras, acompanhados de um resumo narrativo. Análises quantitativas e qualitativas, por meio de descrição e categorização, acompanharão os resultados mapeados, correlacionando-os ao objetivo e questão de pesquisa da revisão de escopo. A abordagem preconizada pelo JBI para seleção de estudos, avaliação crítica, extração de dados e síntese de dados será utilizada.

Palavras-chave: Racismo, Terapia Ocupacional, População Negra, Cultura.

Introduction

The period of enslavement in the Americas marked the beginning of racial categorization that left an enduring legacy of inequality in the fabric of society (Lavalley & Johnson, 2022). The Black population was racialized as inferior, animalistic, erotic, primitive, violent, exotic, and exaggeratedly emotional. Otherwise, white people were racialized as universal, civilized, and morally superior and therefore could classify and inferiorize those who are different (Fanon, 2008). These mischaracterizations were used to justify subjugation and enslavement in all its forms of domination and dehumanization (Fanon, 2008).

Thus, racism is rooted in society and functions as a system of social control and power that limits resources, capabilities, and opportunities between white people and non-white people. In this sense, Mbembe (2018) created the concept of *necropolitics*[1], based on Michel Foucault's work on biopower[2]. Mbembe reflects on the mechanisms of colonial power, led by the State, which defines that Black people do not have the

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[1] Philosophical concept that refers to the use of social and political power to decree how some people may live and how others should die. See Mbembe (2018).

[2] Power mechanism created by the State and institutions to discipline and control bodies and populations.

right to life "[…] being sovereign means exercising control over mortality and defining life as the implementation and manifestation of power" (Mbembe, 2018, p. 5).

Despite the struggles of the Black movements to this day (e.g., claiming rights to access education, health, and social assistance), the lives of Black populations are marked by racism and forms of violence that have negative effects on occupations, as well as on subjectivity, ways of being in the world, identity, social relationships, and self-esteem (Ambrosio & Silva, 2022; Farias et al., 2018; Johnson & Lavalley, 2021; Lavalley & Johnson, 2022; Martins, 2021; Pereira & Magalhães; 2023; Pereira, 2022).

Understanding that racial issues and the resulting inequalities affect how people choose and engage in occupations, occupational therapy scholars from various parts of the world have developed studies dedicated to better understanding the impacts of racism on the occupations of the Black population (Amorim et al., 2020; Farias et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2022; Martins, 2021; Pereira & Magalhães; 2023; Pereira, 2022; Sterman & Njelesani, 2021).

To adopt anti-racist practices, it is up to the occupational therapy practitioners to carry out a self-analysis and reflect on their practices (Pereira & Magalhães, 2023). Critical reflexivity allows the professional to question, and interrogate the origins of their knowledge, and examine how this knowledge is implemented in practice (Kinsella & Whiteford, 2009). This allows us to question the implications of the knowledge produced; where and when knowledge was produced; the included and excluded audiences; and whether social markers and sociocultural factors are being considered. We reiterate that epistemic reflexivity-- a pluralistic perspective and critical dialogue-- must guide occupational therapist practices and interventions in occupational therapy (Jones et al., 2020). It is also worth highlighting that white people must recognize their whiteness and the privileges resulting from it, as well as use their *locus* of enunciation to speak out and denounce the racism present in society (Bento, 2002). This author affirms that there is a narcissistic pact between white people, based on the omission and silencing of inequalities, to preserve the hierarchies of power and neglect the responsibilities inherent in the inequity produced; therefore, white people must engage in anti-racist struggles and use their privileges to denounce and combat racism. Approaches to combating racism cannot be standardized, as they need to consider cultural, social, political, and economic conditions, taking into account the subjectivity of individuals and collectives (Sterman & Njelesani, 2021).

In 2020, the global occupational therapy community achieved an important milestone when the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) recognized racism as a violation of human and occupational rights by issuing a statement condemning systemic racism and supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement.

> You, we, we all have a responsibility to advocate for change. It is imperative that occupational therapists address the systemic discrimination, oppression, and injustices that permeate health and social services around the world. Actions are needed to address the social determinants of health that currently impede justice and equity. Such determinants include racism, poverty, economic restrictions, discrimination, involuntary displacement, disasters, conflicts, and historically oppressive systems (World Federation of Occupational Therapy, 2020).

In 2020, George Floyd, a Black American man, was brutally murdered via state-sanctioned violence in the United States. Due to Floyd's death, demonstrations led by the Black Lives Matter Movement took place in several countries, including Brazil. In this way, several people, companies, and professional groups, such as occupational therapy practitioners, took a stance against racism (Amorim et al., 2020). While occupational therapy organizations have publicly supported anti-racism, the implementation of anti-racist principles more broadly in this field has not been fully achieved. Therefore, beyond statements of support, more comprehensive anti-racist actions and practices are needed in occupational therapy. Thus, scholars have voiced the importance of occupational therapy practitioners being anti-racists, as well as being political, ethical, and committed to social and occupational justice (Bezerra & Alves, 2022; Farias & Vicente, 2022; Lavalley & Johnson, 2022; Pereira & Magalhães, 2023; Sterman & Njelesani, 2021). Therefore, it is worth highlighting that it is necessary to expose racial issues arising from colonialism because omitting them is to ratify the racism that exists in societies across the globe. Additionally, in professional practice, it is necessary to rescue the values, culture, and customs of the Black population, avoiding universalisms that do not represent all ethnic groups. For occupational therapy practitioners to be anti-racist, the knowledge production of non-white occupational therapy practitioners must be recognized, since the absence of this knowledge manifests epistemic racism (Pereira et al., 2022).

This scoping review protocol aims to describe the theoretical and methodological frameworks that guide the practices of occupational therapy practitioners who provide services to Black populations. A preliminary search of PROSPERO, MEDLINE via PubMed, the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, and JBI Evidence Synthesis was conducted on November 13, 2023, and only one scoping review examining anti-racist practices was found (Sterman & Njelesani, 2021). Although there may be some overlap, this review only included articles in the English language and focused solely on occupational therapist practices. Our proposed review will have a broader scope by including articles written in English and Portuguese, as well as theoretical and methodological frameworks.

Positionality

Occupational therapy was founded in the United States and is a profession mostly made up of white, cisgender, heterosexual, Christian, and conservative people (Iwama, 2016). Worldwide, the rehabilitative nature of the profession stems from a legacy originating in countries of the Global North (i.e., countries in Western Europe and North America), shaped by the modus operandi of capitalism. Contrasting this logic, in the countries of the Global South another reality can be found, as in the countries located in Latin America such as Brazil, where the theoretical-practical object of the profession met the emergencies of public policies, re-democratization movements, Anti-Asylum Movement, and the inclusion of people with disabilities (Cruz, 2018; Pereira, 2022). It is worth noting that by South we are referring not to the geographic South, but the countries that are still dealing with the consequences of colonization today (e.g., countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, among others).

Contrary to prevalent Global North demographics in our profession, this scoping review protocol was written by four women, all of them identify themselves as Black

women, cisgender, heterosexual, race scholars, and academic-activists who carry out research that discusses anti-racism in the fields of occupational therapy and occupational science. The first, third, and fourth authors are from Brazil, whose first language is Portuguese, and the second is from the United States and is an English native speaker. The first author is a visiting scholar in the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, under the supervision of the second and fourth authors.

Due to cultural and linguistic differences (Melo-Pfeifer, 2020), we found some difficulties in formulating research questions that made sense in Portuguese and English. Therefore, it is necessary to contextualize how we define the terms **theoretical** and **methodological framework** and **culturally informed approaches**.

Before reaching a consensus to describe the theoretical frameworks that guide the practices of occupational therapists with Black people, we thought about replacing the term theoretical framework with a practice model, more common in the United States. One must concede that occupational therapy models were created in countries from the Global North such as the United States and Canada from the 1970s onwards (e.g., Canadian Model of Occupational Performance and Engagement- CMOP-E, Model of Human Occupation, Person-Environment Occupation- PEO, Person-Environment-Occupation-Performance-PEOP), which are based on the theoretical elements of the profession to guide practice (Cruz, 2018; Larsson-Lund & Nyman, 2017).

However, occupational therapy has developed worldwide in very different ways depending on each country's historical, economic, political, social, and cultural processes. In the context of occupational therapy development in Brazil, practice models were not created, nor adopted, because according to some occupational therapists, these models from the Global North do not relate to pervasive social issues in Brazilian society (Cruz, 2018). Furthermore, many validated assessment and intervention instruments used by these models have not yet been cross-culturally adapted to Brazil, which makes their use in the country quite challenging.

> Undergraduate courses in occupational therapy in Brazil already started with a curriculum based on the American model of rehabilitation and an attempt to change this curriculum. Furthermore, important social movements such as the new democracy, the creation of the SUS -Health Unic System, the Anti-Asylum Movement, and the struggles for the rights of people with disabilities, encouraged discussion among occupational therapists about the creation of critical occupational therapy and distanced from the international references from which it originated (Cruz, 2018, p. 510).

Therefore, many Brazilian occupational therapists base their practices on occupational therapy from other references (e.g., philosophy, education, sociology, and anthropology) that dialogue with the Brazilian reality, aiming at emancipation and social participation. Therefore, to find a term that made sense in both languages, we chose to adopt **theoretical framework**, which is defined as:

> A theoretical framework is a logically developed and connected set of concepts and premises—developed from one or more theories—that a researcher

creates to scaffold a study. To create a theoretical framework, the researcher must define any concepts and theories that will provide the grounding of the research, unite them through logical connections, and relate these concepts to the study that is being carried out. In short, a theoretical framework is a reflection of the work the researcher engages in to use a theory in a given study (Varpio et al., 2020, p. 990).

As it pertains to practice methodology, we mean the methodological aspects of the practices of the studies included in the scoping review protocol.

Another challenge we faced was defining what kind of approaches we would include in this scoping review protocol. Occupational therapy is defined as a health profession broadly (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020), so we considered using the term therapeutic approaches that guide the practices of occupational therapists with Black people. However, in the Brazilian context, occupational therapy practitioners have stated that this profession is not limited to the health area, but extends to the areas of education (Farias et al., 2022), social (Borba & Barros, 2012), social assistance (Bardi et al., 2023) and culture (Silva et al., 2021). Obviously, these contexts are not therapeutic. Therefore, we adopted the term **culturally informed approaches,** which means including as essential components in practices the culture, values, beliefs, and customs of people or groups marginalized in society (Sabri et al., 2022). This approach allows occupational therapy practitioners to include this cultural knowledge in occupational therapists' practices with Black people.

Understanding the therapists' practices with the Black populations is pertinent, as it makes an important and **urgent recovery** of the professionals' debt to this population.

Methods

A scoping review is used to map and synthesize the literature on a topic that has not been covered in depth previously, as well as to summarize and disseminate research results, and to identify research gaps in the existing literature that need to be further explored on the topic. (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). The proposed review will follow the JBI methodology for scoping reviews (Peters et al., 2020, 2022) and report findings in line with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses literature search extension (PRISMA-ScR). The protocol was registered with the Open Science Framework (OSF) under the DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/DA7RX. The review question was based on the PCC framework (Population or Participants, Concept, and Context), according to the methodology proposed by the JBI (Peters et al., 2020).

Review questions

i) What are the culturally informed approaches that guide the practices of occupational therapy practitioners who provide services to Black populations?

ii) What are the theoretical and methodological frameworks that guide the practices of occupational therapy practitioners who provide services to Black populations?

Inclusion criteria

This review will include articles published between 2013 and 2024, commensurate to the founding of the Black Lives Matter Movement, and articles written in Portuguese and English, as these are the languages spoken fluently by the reviewers.

PCC framework (Population or Participants, Concept, and Context).

Population

This scoping review will consider studies that include specific approaches that guide occupational therapists' practices with Black populations

Concept

This scoping review will consider studies that describe and reflect on theoretical and methodological frameworks that guide the practices of occupational therapy practitioners who provide services to Black populations and address ethnic-racial issues and racism, as well as the implications of these references in professional practice broadly.

Context

There will be no contextual restrictions, that is, studies from different geographic, social, cultural, and/or political locations that address practices will be considered, as well as any references adopted by occupational therapy practitioners to expose/address racial issues and resulting inequalities will be included.

Types of sources

This scoping review will consider quantitative (experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental), qualitative (including, but not limited to, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and action research), and mixed methods studies. Commentary and opinion articles will also be considered for inclusion in this scoping review. All primary, observational studies and clinical trials, as well as opinion articles meet the inclusion criteria. Literature reviews, due to the risk of duplication of selected material, will be excluded.

Search strategy

The search strategy was designed with the assistance of an experienced librarian with expertise in the health sciences and aimed to locate published studies. A 3-step search strategy was utilized (Peters et al., 2020). First, a limited search of MEDLINE (PubMed) and CINAHL (EBSCOhost) was undertaken to identify articles related to racism and anti-racist practices in occupational therapy between 2013 and 2024. The text words contained in the titles and abstracts of relevant articles, and the index terms (e.g., "Black people", "Afro-descendant", "African-American", racism, "anti-racism", related to the key terms occupational therapy or occupational therapists), used to describe the articles (along with their entry terms, in the case of MeSH), were used to develop a full search strategy

for MEDLINE via PubMed (see Table 1). The second phase will be implementing the search strategy, including all identified keywords and index terms, which will be adapted for each included database and/or information source. The databases to be searched will include CINAHL (EBSCOhost), MEDLINE (PubMed), PsycINFO (EBSCOhost), LILACS (BIREME/PAHO/WHO), SCIELO, Web of Science, and Scopus. Finally, hand searching will be done on the reference list of studies included in the review.

Table 1. Search strategy in the MEDLINE database via PUBMED. Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 2024.

Search	PubMed – Apr 9, 2024	Results
#1	("occupational therapists"[MeSH Terms] OR "occupational therapy"[All Fields]) AND ("Black people"[MeSH Terms] OR "Black"[tiab] OR Blacks [tiab] OR "African-American" [tiab] OR "Afro-descendant" [tiab] OR "racism"[All Fields] OR "anti-racism"[All Fields]	212
#2	("Occupational Therapists"[MeSH Terms] OR "occupational therapy" [All Fields]) AND (theory [MeSH Terms] OR theories [tiab] OR methodology [tiab] OR methodologies [tiab] OR method [tiab] OR methods[tiab]) OR (approaches [MeSH Terms] OR "Cultural Characteristics" [tiab]) AND Racism [All Fields] OR "anti-racism" [All Fields]	12
#3	racism [All Fields] AND ("occupational therapists"[MeSH Terms] OR "occupational therapy"[All fields])	33

Source: Created by the authors, 2024.

In response to the initial search, an adjusted search will be carried out in all selected databases considering the use of descriptors in English and Portuguese, using search engines detailed in Table 2. Synonyms and alternative terms will be included to the initial search keywords. The formulation of the search strategy was planned according to the particularities of each search system in the databases.

Table 2. Selected search and languages.

Selected search	Languages
Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS)	Portuguese
Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)	English

Source: Created by the authors, 2024.

Study/source of evidence selection

Following the search, all identified citations will be collated and uploaded into Covidence (Covidence systematic review software, n.d.), which will automatically remove duplicates and facilitate screening. Each title and abstract will be screened by two independent reviewers for assessment against the inclusion criteria. The full text of selected citations will be assessed in detail against the inclusion criteria by two independent reviewers. Reasons for the exclusion of sources of evidence in full texts that do not meet the inclusion criteria will be recorded and reported in the scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers at each stage of the selection process

will be resolved through discussion or consultation with another reviewer. The results of the search and the study inclusion process will be reported in full in the final scoping review and presented through a PRISMA-ScR flow diagram.

Data extraction

Data will be extracted from articles by at least two independent reviewers using a data extraction tool developed by the reviewers. The extracted data to be recorded in the tool will include specific details about the populations, concept, study methods, context, and key findings relevant to the review question (see Table 3). The data extraction tool will be modified and revised as necessary during the process of extracting data from each included evidence source. Modifications will be detailed in the scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers will be resolved through discussion, or with an additional reviewer until consensus is met.

Table 3. Data extraction instrument.

Scoping review details	
Publication details	Title
	Year of publication
	Author
	Journal
	The country in which the study is conducted
	Language of publication
Study details	Objectives
	Inclusion criteria
	Exclusion criteria
	Population
	Concept
	Context
	Types of interventions
Methodological information	Type of study (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed)
	Methods
	Theoretical framework
	Methodological framework
	Culturally informed approaches
Findings	Main findings
	Identification of outcomes
	Limitations
	Recommendations
	Conclusion

Source: Adapted from JBI (Peters et al., 2020) by the authors from 2024.

Data analysis and presentation

The data will be presented using diagrams, tables, and/or word clouds, accompanied by a narrative summary. Quantitative and qualitative analyses, through description and categorization, will accompany the mapped results, correlating them to the objective

and research question of the scoping review. Preparing this review protocol is the opportunity for authors to pilot and determine how to best present their data or map and provide detailed descriptions for the reader.

Possible contributions

The study will be able to expand knowledge about evidenced-based approaches that guide the practices of occupational therapy practitioners who provide services to Black populations and the implications of those strategies in professional practice broadly. In addition, identify the theoretical and methodological frameworks adopted in their practices and address ethnic-racial issues and racism, which can enhance ways of confronting racism and violence that have a negative impact on the occupations of the Black population, as well as actions to amplify anti-racism in the practice of occupational therapy.

We expect to identify gaps in the literature regarding the discussion of specific frameworks that inform the practices of occupational therapy practitioners who provide services to Black populations. It is also anticipated that implications from the review will guide occupational therapy students, professionals, and educators toward a critical and culturally reflective practice with Black and other minority service users.

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Author's Contributions

Amanda dos Santos Pereira and Flávia dos Santos Coelho wrote the text conception, organization and analysis of sources, text writing and final review. Lilian Magalhães and Khalilah Robinson Johnson guided the research project and wrote the text and final review. All authors approved the final version of the text.

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