

4-16-2014

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Recommended Citation

Huband, Patricia and Mary Pierce Moran. "A Phenomenological Study of Farmer or Rancher Quality of Life Perceptions Who Have Conditions of Aging, Chronic Health Issues, or Aging." (2014). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/ot/5>

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A Phenomenological Study of Farmer or Rancher Quality of Life Perceptions Who Have Conditions of Aging, Chronic Health Issues, or Disability

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Purpose

The study purpose is to identify quality of life factors of farmers and ranchers with conditions of aging, chronic health conditions, and disability.

Background

Health care providers with little knowledge or experience in agriculture often provide farmers and ranchers with recommendations anticipated to improve health status, but may negatively affect quality of life (QoL) and participation in valued life activities. Scant data is available to identify QoL as experienced by farmers and ranchers.

Methods

- 🐄 Qualitative research method
- 🐄 Phenomenological approach
- 🐄 Semi-structured interview instrument
- 🐄 Convenience sampling
- 🐄 Inclusion criteria:
 - 🐄 Agricultural Producer
 - 🐄 18-85 age range
 - 🐄 Living in New Mexico
 - 🐄 Health condition, aging, and/or disability
- 🐄 Exclusion criteria:
 - 🐄 No longer farming
 - 🐄 Unable to give consent

Results

Interviews from five agricultural producers were conducted and transcribed verbatim. Future research will entail additional interviews, transcription, and identification and categorization of themes. Data has not been analyzed for codes and themes. Below are exemplars of client quotes that show distinct features of agriculture as a way of life.

"Joy. I enjoy coming out here and doing what I do. I want to see my plants grow." - W.L.

"I love farming, I love doing – I don't mind working day and night." - L.H.

*"To me its very satis[fying].
Get out in the fresh air,
I leave all my problems behind,
I don't have problems out there." - G.L.*

"My soul's tied to the dirt." - S.I.

"My ancestors came to this part of Mexico (present day New Mexico) in 1612. Part of our attachment to this land is genetic. The ancestors came to conquer it; not the people, the land. We came for the land. So, the love for this land is genetic." - C.T.

Discussion

Tentative inferences of results are that existing and preferred QoL assessment tools do not accurately represent the distinct qualities and characteristics of farmer and rancher QoL, resulting in biased, inaccurate, or irrelevant data.

Implications

Occupational Therapists need to be aware of the social and cultural influences impacting the beliefs and behaviors of farmers and ranchers to enhance healthcare services and quality of life.

References

References upon request.

