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## Fostering changes in community occupational therapy practice to promote social participation of elder adults: A participatory action research

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Social participation is a key determinant of healthy aging on which community occupational therapists (COTs) can intervene when working with older adults having disabilities. Despite the universal healthcare system across Canada, disparities exist in older adults' access to preventive interventions such as those fostering social participation. Moreover, organizational barriers to integrating these interventions were identified by COTs. To our knowledge, no study identified actions aimed at changing COTs' practice to promote the social participation of older adults. Since it involves community members, healthcare providers and researchers, participatory action research (PAR) is a promising approach to change practices and address health disparities in older adults. A steering committee, including various stake-holders (older adults, representatives of community organization, home healthcare managers, COTs and researchers), will be part of the research and meet at each step of the process. Three group discussions will be conducted with: 1) older adults having disabilities, 2) COTs, and 3) lay workers in community organizations. Photo-voice, a type of PAR promoting empowerment and social change through the use of photography, will be used by participants to inform stakeholders. Data from group discussions and photo-voice will be analyzed by student-researcher and verified by the steering committee. Following the phase of findings dissemination, stakeholders and knowledge users concerned with the issue will agree on and develop specific action plans. By providing a space of dialogue and tools for concrete actions, this study will help foster change in COTs' practice aimed at promoting social participation as a mean of healthy aging.

### Biography

Pier-Luc Turcotte has completed his occupational therapy undergraduate studies at Université de Sherbrooke and is now pursuing a Master's degree in Community Health Sciences at the Research Centre on Aging of the University Institute of Geriatrics of Sherbrooke. He received scholarships from the Fonds de la Recherche du Québec – Santé (grant no. 31662) and the Canadian Occupational Therapy Foundation.

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