Managing occupations in everyday life for people with advanced cancer at home
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Background
Early diagnosis and effective treatment techniques have enabled people with advanced cancer to live for extended periods of time. Cancer in advanced stages can have a profound impact on the ability to manage occupations in everyday life. Palliative care is often carried out on an outpatient basis were focus tend to be on medical treatment and less on the everyday life of the individuals. As a consequence, occupational needs may not be adequately identified and addressed for people with advanced cancer. Although studies have explored aspects of how people with advanced cancer manage occupations, it is recognized that there is lack of research in larger and more heterogeneous populations.

Purpose
The purpose was to describe how people with advanced cancer manage their occupations in everyday life at home.

Methods
A qualitative descriptive design was applied. Semi-structured interviews were performed in participant’s homes. A content analysis was performed.

Results
The sample comprised 73 participants (53% male), mean age 68.5 years, 36% lived alone and 63% lived in a small town/rural area. The analysis resulted in a core category “Everyday life under change” and two sub-categories: 1) Applying strategies to manage occupations in everyday life and 2) Preserving a satisfying everyday life. The study showed that people with advanced cancer struggle to preserve a familiar everyday life under change. The participants sought to achieve life balance e.g. through self-developed strategies to manage valued occupations.

Conclusion
The study contributes to the knowledge base of occupational therapy and occupational Science for people with advanced cancer. The knowledge can inform future interventions targeted at improving occupational engagement for people with advanced cancer in order to enhance quality of life.

Keywords:
Occupations, advanced cancer, life balance