Procedural memory stimulation

Skills learning

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Objective  To evaluate the effectiveness of procedural memory stimulation and its impact on observed performance of daily activities.

Setting  Day hospital of an Alzheimer’s Dementia Research and Care Unit

Participants  Person with mild and mild-moderate Alzheimer’s Disease, without major behavioural disturbances, living in the community (E), healthy elderly (C)

Mean age  77 (E), 68 (C)
Gender -
MMSE  E=19.8 (± 3.5), C=28.7 (± 0.9)

Design  Pretest-posttest control group design

Sample size  nE = 10; nC = 10
Follow-up  3 weeks

Intervention  Learning of procedural memory strategies for the rehabilitation of basic and instrumental activities of daily living. The training focused on skills that are relatively well preserved in patients with Alzheimer’s Disease. Before training people were tested on speed of performance in 20 activities. 5 patients were then trained during 3 weeks on 10 daily activities (group a) while the other 5 patients were trained ten other activities (group b) in order to detect separately the improvement in trained and not-trained activities. Activities in group a and b were comparable in terms of difficulty. The time required to perform activities by group a and b was compared with the time healthy adults needed to perform each of the twenty activities.

Frequency  1 hour daily, five times a week
Duration  3 weeks
Facilitator  rehabilitation therapist

Outcome measures  Time required to perform daily basic (ADL) and instrumental activities (IADL): Rey Figure (Recall) (Rey, 1983), Logical Memory, Learning Test (paired words) (Spinler & Tognoni, 1987)

Skill learning  Mirror reading task
Priming  Word-stem completion task (Graf et al., 1984), Category-word completion task

Results  After three weeks of training patients with dementia had become faster in performing the trained activities, and their performance differed less from the healthy elderly compared to before the start of the training. Patients also improved (to a lesser extent) in ‘not trained’ activities, suggesting that functional achievements may be independent of the learning context. There was no improvement on neuropsychological tests, except a trend of
Community care

improvement for the Stem Completion Test.

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<tr>
<th>Implementation material</th>
<th>E = experimental group; C = control group</th>
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Information Desk Effective Care and Treatment in Dementia
http://www.vumc.com/branch/information-desk-dementia-care/