Cognitive stimulation therapy improved cognition and quality of life in dementia


Q In people with dementia, does cognitive stimulation therapy (CST) improve cognition and quality of life?

METHODS

Design: randomised controlled trial.

Allocation: concealed.

Blinding: blinded (outcome assessor).

Follow up period: 7 weeks.

Setting: 5 day centres and 18 residential homes (with >15 people in each) in the UK.

Patients: 201 people (mean age 85 y, 79% women) who met DSM-IV criteria for dementia, scored 10–24 on the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE), were able to communicate (according the Clifton Assessment Procedures for the Elderly—Behaviour Rating Scale), had sufficient vision and hearing to participate and use material in a group, and did not have major physical illness or disability (including learning disability).

Interventions: CST (n = 115): fourteen 45 minute sessions twice a week for 7 weeks. The programme used the concepts of reality orientation and cognitive stimulation and included the topics of money, word games, the present day, and famous faces. "Usual activities" (n = 86): in most settings, this consisted of doing nothing.

Outcomes: cognition (MMSE), quality of life (Quality of Life—Alzheimer's Disease Scale), communication (Holden Communication Scale), behaviour (Clifton Assessment Procedures for the Elderly—Behaviour Rating Scale), global functioning (Clinical Dementia Rating Scale), depression (Cornell Scale for Depression in Dementia), and anxiety (Rating Anxiety in Dementia).

Patient follow up: 83%.

MAIN RESULTS

Analysis was by intention to treat. More patients in the CST group than in the usual care group had >4 points improvement on the Alzheimer's Disease Assessment Scale—Cognition (relative benefit increase 131%, 95% CI 27 to 330; number needed to treat 6, CI 4 to 19)*. Cognition and quality of life were improved in the CST group but deteriorated in the usual activities group (table). The groups did not differ for any other outcome (table).

CONCLUSION

In people with dementia, cognitive stimulation therapy improved cognition and quality of life.

* RBI, NNT, and CI calculated from data in article.

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See commentary on next page.