



Psychotherapy in Mild Cognitive Impairment: A Participatory Approach to Defining Patient-Relevant Outcomes

Michelle Gerards¹, Hanna Gräfe¹, Julia Dickmeiß¹, Frank Jessen^{1,2,3}, Ayda Rostamzadeh¹

(1) Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Medical Faculty, University of Cologne, Cologne, Germany; (2) Deutsches Zentrum für Neurodegenerative Erkrankungen e. V. (DZNE) Bonn, Bonn, Germany; (3) Excellence Cluster on Cellular Stress Responses in Aging-Associated Diseases (CECAD)

Background

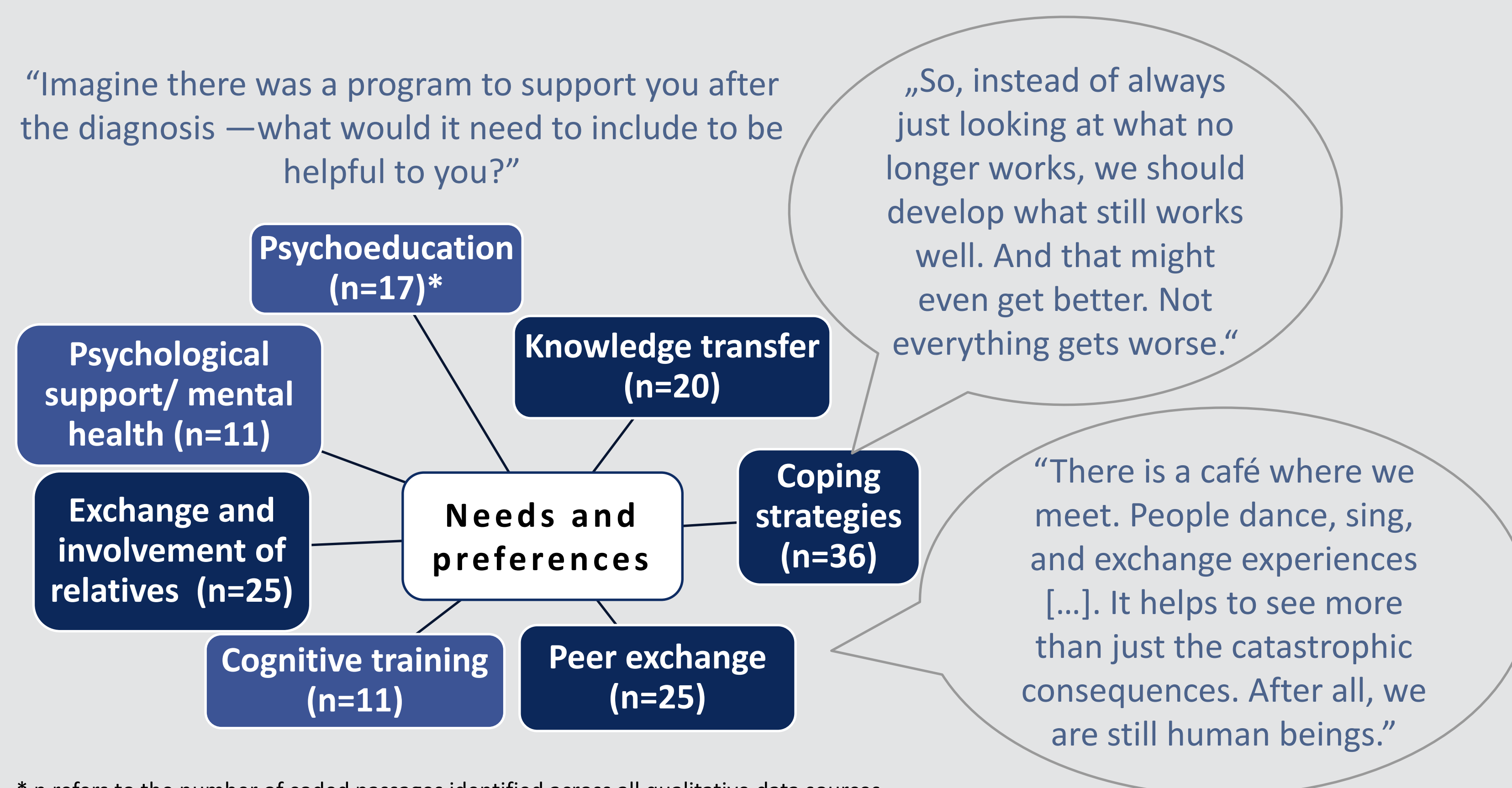
- Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is associated with an increased risk of Alzheimer's dementia.
- Prognostic uncertainty and disease-related changes can cause significant psychological distress.
- Despite the high prevalence of MCI, specific psychotherapeutic interventions for this population are currently lacking.
- At the same time, the MCI stage represents a critical therapeutic window, as cognitive resources are often still sufficient for preventive and stabilizing interventions.

Methods

- PsyActive-MCI employed a participatory research approach involving people with MCI, relatives, and representatives of counseling services as co-researchers.
- A mixed-methods design was used, including focus groups, workshops, photovoice, and questionnaire surveys to explore experiences, support needs, and patient-relevant outcomes.
- Qualitative and quantitative findings were integrated to identify central support needs and inform intervention development.
- Aim: Participatory development of a group-based psychotherapeutic intervention study and identification of patient-relevant outcomes**

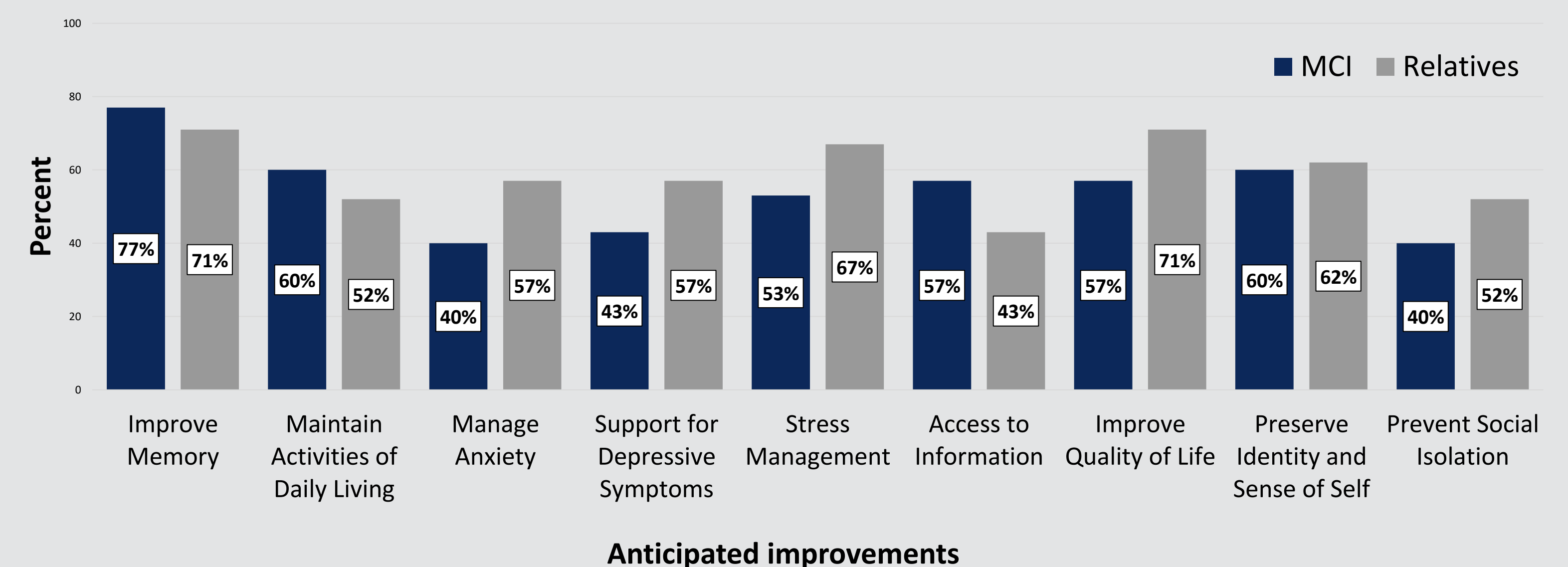
Results

- Experience following an MCI diagnosis:** Fear, worry, and relief resulting from diagnostic clarity, as well as changes in everyday life and the desire for support.
- Changes in everyday life:** Coping with the disease (n=50), use of memory aids (n=36), changes in family roles and caregiver burden (n=35), sharing diagnosis (n=21), future planning (n=9), lifestyle changes (n=8)*.
- Needs and preferences for a psychotherapeutic intervention:**



* n refers to the number of coded passages identified across all qualitative data sources

- Anticipated improvements from participating in a psychotherapeutic intervention:**



Sample characteristics

MCI patients (n=30): 14 (46.7%) female, mean age 68.77 ± 8.6; **Relatives** (n=30): 21 (70.0%) female, mean age 61.96 ± 12.5
No statistically significant differences between groups were observed (p < .05)

- Patient-relevant endpoints for the planned intervention study:** (1) Strategies for coping with the disease, (2) exchange and activities with other affected persons, (3) involving and supporting relatives, (4) structured information transfer and psychoeducation, and (5) psychological support and mental health.

Conclusion

- PsyActive-MCI employs a participatory research approach to address an existing care gap for people with MCI.
- This participatory approach aims to increase the relevance, acceptance, and effectiveness of the planned psychotherapeutic intervention.

Contact

Michelle Gerards, MD
University Hospital of Cologne, Germany
E-Mail: michelle.gerards@uk-koeln.de

