

The impact of cognitive training on quality of life and caregiver burden in patients with dementia

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INTRODUCTION

Dementia is a major health issue in Taiwan. The Dementia Epidemiology Survey by the Ministry of Health and Welfare shows a clear trend: the prevalence of dementia among the elderly over 65 increases with age, potentially doubling every five years. Given this increase and the familial responsibility of caring for dementia patients—exacerbated by a lack of caregiver manpower due to childlessness—it's vital to explore interventions to delay cognitive decline.

AIM

The study aimed to assess cognitive training's impact on dementia patients' life quality and associated with caregiver burden.

RESULTS

The average age of the participants was 79.38±5.93 years old, predominantly female (62%), with a Clinical Dementia Rating (CDR) of 2 or less. Thirteen individuals completed the program. Comparison of the pre-and post-test analyses showed that the cognitive training program significantly provided improvement in the quality of life of the demented patients in the domains of activities of daily living (p=0.009) and anxiety (p=0.003), as well as of pain (p=0.020)(Table1). There was a statistically significant improvement in family caregiving stress (p=0.019), which revealed that the cognitive training program could improve the quality of life of demented patients and alleviate the stress of family caregiving.(Table2)

Table1. Comparison of the pre-and post-test analyses

EQ-5D-5L	P value
MOBILITY	0.955
SELF-CARE	0.997
USUAL ACTIVITIES	0.009*
PAIN / DISCOMFORT	0.020*
ANXIETY / DEPRESSION	0.003*
HEALTH TODAY (0-100)	0.994
P<0.05*	

Table2. Comparison of pre-and post-test in family caregiving stress analyses

caregiver stress score	mean±SD
pre-test	18.00±6.10
post-test	16.08±5.08
P value	0.019*
P<0.05*	

METHOD

The investigation involved dementia patients from the Taipei Medical University Hospital community, providing them with a 12-week cognitive training program. This intervention included weekly 2-hour sessions, with assessments conducted pre- and post-intervention, utilizing tools like the EQ-5D Healthy Quality of Life Measurement Questionnaire and the sCZBI12 Caregiver Load Scale.

CONCLUSIONS

During the progression of dementia, changes in cognitive function frequently lead to a diminished capacity for independent living, adversely affecting the individual's quality of life and adding to the caregiver's burden. However, engaging in cognitive training and life function enhancement can improve the patient's cognition, judgment, responsiveness, and quality of daily living. Such improvements can enrich the lives of those with dementia and, concurrently, alleviate the caregiving strain.

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