

To use of reminiscence therapy in alzheimer patients

Abstract

Dementia is a progressive disorder that impacts several cognitive functions. However, some aspects of cognitive function are preserved until late in the disease and can therefore be the targets of specific interventions. Available studies suggest that reminiscence therapy can improve mood and some cognitive abilities in the Alzheimer patients. This mini review was written to give the information for health person working with Alzheimer patients.

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Introduction

Alzheimer's disease (AD) together with cognitive decline causes various neuropsychiatric and behavioral problems in activities of daily living, resulting in serious physical and psychological destruction in the elderly.¹ During the final stage, patients memory becomes so poor that no one is recognizable. Patients lose bowel and bladder control and eventually need constant care.²

Pharmacological and non-pharmacological methods are used in the treatment of such symptoms in AD. Non-pharmacological interventions that have no side effects and slow disease progression are currently becoming increasingly important as an addition to pharmacological treatment.³ Non-pharmacological applications are patient-centered and geared towards supporting the individuals rather than forcing them or focusing on their deficiencies.⁴ Reminiscence therapy is the most commonly used non-pharmacological application in AD and other types of dementia.⁵⁻⁸

Reminiscence therapy

Reminiscence therapy has been used since the early 1960's and towards the end of this period has taken the form of sharing the activities, events and experiences in the past with other individuals in the group and others, usually with the help of an old music, voice recording, photograph and other familiar elements, and in the form of individual or group therapy by nursing professionals.⁸ Its use in or outside institutions, especially by geriatric nurses, social workers, occupational therapists and psychologists became widespread in the 1980s.⁹ Reminiscence is defined as the individual remembering a past event, verbally or nonverbally, alone or with a group.⁷ Reminiscence was defined by Burnside and Haight as "the process of remembering long-forgotten experiences and events that are worth remembering for the person" based on its dictionary meaning.¹⁰ Stinson states that the Nursing Interventions Classification System (NIC) describes reminiscence therapy as an intervention based on remembering the events experienced in the past in order to increase the adaptation to the present time, quality of life, and satisfaction from the institution of institutionalized individuals. According to the NIC, reminiscence therapy is largely derived from the nursing information system, care plan manuals and nursing books. Reminiscence therapy is among the independent functions of nurses recommended by NIC and it is emphasized that it should be among the care applications provided in the institutions where elderly people live.¹¹

Reminiscence therapy is used in emergency departments, day care nursing homes, long-term care homes, hospitals, and the houses

of the individuals in addition to nursing homes.¹⁰ The therapy is administered in the form of sessions 1-2 times a week for a total of 6-12 weeks, each lasting 30-60 minutes in the literature.^{5,12-15} The most positive results were reported with sessions performed in groups of 6 to 10 elderly people living in an institution, providing sufficient time for each individual in this groups.^{10,12} It is suggested that reminiscence therapy be conducted with positive memories during the session.^{11,16} Each session should have a specific subject. The last session should be the closing session with a general summarization and evaluation.¹¹

Reminiscence therapy in alzheimer patients

Available studies suggest that reminiscence therapy can improve mood and some cognitive abilities in the Alzheimer patients. In addition reminiscence therapy decrease in depression, effected positive on daily living activities and social activities.¹⁷⁻²² Reminiscence groups are most commonly formed with dementia patients living in nursing homes in the literature.⁶ Reminiscence therapy has been found to decrease depressive emotions¹⁷⁻¹⁹ and feeling of loneliness,⁵ and to increase psychological well-being,¹⁸⁻²⁰ life satisfaction^{8,10-18} and communication.⁵ Additionally, reminiscence therapy was found to increase the cognitive level^{20,21} and social activities,²² and have a positive effect on daily living activities.²¹

Conclusion

Reminiscence therapy had a positive effect on communication but a limited effect on collaboration, socialization and restlessness. The positive effect of reminiscence therapy on the cognitive status, depression and daily living activities in institutionalized mild and moderate AD patients indicates a need for more widespread use of reminiscence therapy and training healthcare staff and especially nurses to support such activities, while the limited effect on daily living activities indicates the need to establish programs supporting any activities the individual cannot perform while developing those that can be performed.

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Conflicts of interest

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