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How Effective Are Cognitive Oriented Approaches in Neurodegenerative Disorders?- a Clinical Study

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Introduction: Non pharmacological interventions are recently proposed for the management of mild Alzheimer's Disease (mAD). Aims: The aim of this study was the comparison of the magnitude of the observed changes applying 2 types of cognitive interventions, the cognitive training (CT) and the cognitive stimulation (CS). **Methods**: Fifty five systematically recruited mAD outpatients separated randomly in 3 subgroups, 2 experimental (CT & CS) and one control group (CON). They were matched in age, education, duration and type of medication and style of living. The intervention programs were lasting 4 months on individual basis. **Results:** Statistically significant differences were found in the general cognitive state between groups (p=.000- .024) after the end of the program (1st follow up) and 12 months later (2nd follow up) and in trained and untrained cognitive abilities. Analytically, the CTs showed large effect improvement in general cognitive state in both follow up. Large to medium effect size improvements were observed in trained abilities as memory, naming, retrieval and time response, as well as in non trained cognitive abilities (prospective memory, shifting ability, face recognition). Both the CSs and the CONs showed large effect size general cognitive decline. However CSs were improved in time response. **Conclusions:** CT intervention can cause large effect size improvements in the general cognitive state and the trained cognitive abilities and transfer of the effects to untrained cognitive abilities remoting the possibility of institutionalization. Non structured interventions without training processing don't seem to restrain the cognitive decline of the patients.

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