

Effect of individual reminiscence for older adults with mild to moderate dementia in nursing homes: A Three-Arm RCT

Katrin Gillis, Laeta Rymenams, Loes Van Gansen, Peter Van Bogaert

Background

Because of limited pharmacological treatment options for older adults with dementia, relevant physical, sensory, psychological or social interventions offer alternative opportunities. The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of an individual standardized therapy on depressive symptoms (primary outcome), cognition and behaviour (secondary outcomes) for older people with mild to moderate dementia, performed by trained nursing home volunteers as facilitators.

Method

Residents (>60 year) of 6 nursing homes in Belgium were included with major neurocognitive disorder according to DSM-V criteria with a Mini-Mental State Examination < 24 and >10. Study participants were randomly allocated to one of three groups: (1) reminiscence group; (2) placebo group (participants received individual social activities such as games, walking or music, guided by a volunteer or staff with the same schedule as the intervention group) or (3) control group (received usual care).

Individual standardized reminiscence therapy was based on sessions around selected themes during a scheduled period guided by a facilitator between January and June 2016. Two 45-minute sessions were arranged each week, for an 8-week period. Four personalized memory boxes (family, profession, holiday and games) were established with artifacts such as photographs or other small items, which family and friends have provided.

All participants were tested pre and post intervention period with various validated assessment scales to evaluate depressive symptoms, cognition and behaviour.

Results

Differences between post and pre intervention scores will be presented for each assessment scale showing relevance of therapy in comparison with the placebo and control group.

Discussion and learning outcomes

Through the reminiscence therapy staff will learn systematically about each participant's aspects of his or her life, personality and preferences and these insights can be used within a person-centred approach to deliver supportive and individualized care.