Distinctive effects between cognitive stimulation and reminiscence therapy on cognitive function and quality of life for different types of behavioral problems in dementia

Abstract

Background: Among the various complementary therapies for patients with dementia (PwD), cognitive stimulation therapy (CST) and reminiscence therapy (RT) are frequently used to improve cognitive function and quality of life. However, no studies have examined the use of complementary therapies applied to different types of behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD) in PwD.

Objectives: The purpose of this study was to investigate the distinctive effects of CST and RT on cognitive function and quality of life for PwD with three types of behavioral problems—the dispute, return, and dissociate types.

Methods: A quasi-experimental design was employed. A total of PwD residing in ten long-term care institutions participated in the study and were divided into three groups. The CST and RT groups received 50-minute sessions of intervention therapy once a week for 10 continuous weeks, and the control group participated in regular activities. The pre-test (week 1), post-test (week 12), and follow-up (week 24) data were collected using the Mini–Mental State Examination and Quality of Life–Alzheimer’s Disease. Two-way analysis of variance was used for data analysis.
Results: The results of our study revealed CST and RT interventions had positive effects on the participants’ cognition and quality of life. For short-term effects on cognitive function, CST was the most positive intervention for the dispute type. With regard to short-term effects on quality of life, CST was greater than RT for PwD. For follow-up effects, CST and RT may have potentially sustained effects.

Conclusion: This study suggests that CST and RT could be applied to improve the cognitive function and quality of life for PwD, as well as contribute to the effectiveness of nonpharmacological approaches to PwD with certain types of behavioral problems.

Key words: cognitive stimulation, reminiscence, dementia, quality of life, behavioral problem, cognitive function