Can Reminiscence Therapy Improve Cognitive Function of Elderly with Dementia?

Chong WL(1)
(1)Occupational Therapy Department (Integrated Rehabilitation Services), Tseung Kwan O Hospital

Keywords:
reminiscence therapy
dementia
elderly
cognitive function

Introduction
Dementia is one of the most distressing and burdensome mental health problems in aged population. Hong Kong is an aging population with increasing number of elder. Thus, it is crucial to intervene the issue of people with dementia to promote their safe living and delay the progression of dementia.

Objectives
A five session group reminiscence therapy (RT) was designed by occupational therapist in Tseung Kwan O Hospital for people with dementia since January 2013. This study was aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of this program on whether it could increase cognitive function of people with dementia.

Methodology
Chinese Mini Mental State Examination (CMMSE) was used as an evaluation tool for this program. During January to July 2013, there were patients recruited into the group RT and had cognitive assessment done before RT and within one month upon completion of the group. Patients who did not receive cognitive training in TKOH and had CMMSE done before and three to six month afterward during January to December 2012 were screened and selected as control. To assess the effectiveness of RT, paired t test was used to evaluate the changes in CMMSE total score and Wilcoxon signed ranks test was used to evaluate the changes in CMMSE sub-scores.

Result
There were total seventeen patients selected in the RT group and eighteen patients were selected in control group. The CMMSE total score in RT group was statistical
significantly increased by 2 (p=0.017) after completed at least three sessions of RT while there was no statistical significant difference in CMMSE total score in control group (p=0.858). The post-group RT CMMSE sub-score of language was statistical significantly increased by 1 (p=0.007) where the sub-score of delayed recall in control group was statistical significantly decreased by 0.6 points (p=0.046). There were no statistical difference noted in other CMMSE sub-scores between RT and control group. This study showed that a three to five sessions out-patient group RT which held in weekly basis could increase general cognitive function and could also improve language ability in people with dementia.