



Service Priorities and Programmes
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Mobile Functional Cognition Program to improve Cognitive and Occupational Functioning of Substance Abusers

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Introduction

The literature shows that chronic drug use is associated with multiple cognitive deficits resulting into impairment in occupational and social functioning of substance abusers. Researches indicate that early cognitive assessment and training results in significant improvement of functional cognition. However, engagement of drug abusers in treatment and rehabilitation is always a challenge. We therefore developed a 2-year territory-wide project, namely Mobile Functional Cognition Program, to improve their accessibility to rehabilitation. It was an eight-session program provided weekly on-site visits to various non-governmental drug centers. Services included cognitive assessment and training, psychoeducation and lifestyle redesign coaching.

Objectives

The program aimed at improving cognitive function and occupational functioning of substance abusers receiving services from all Counselling Centres for Psychotropic Substance Abusers (CCPSAs) and Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Residential Centres (DTRCs) in Hong Kong.

Methodology

The program was carried out in the period from July 2015 to June 2017, and was evaluated with a 'pre- and post-test' design. Participants were recruited through the referral from the mentioned NGOs. Changes of cognitive functioning and occupational functioning were measured by modified Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) and Addenbrooke's Cognitive Examination Revised (ACER).

Result

130 participants from 7 DTRCs and 1 CCPSA entered into the program, while 113 (52% male and 48% female, age range from 16 to 74) of them have completed the whole program and pre-post assessment. Data was analyzed by Wilcoxon signed-rank test. Results showed statistically significant increase in 1) various cognitive domains, which included attention ($p < 0.005$), visuospatial ($p < 0.005$), memory ($p < 0.001$) and language ($p < 0.001$), 2) occupational functioning, which

included performance sub-score ($p < 0.001$) and satisfaction sub-score ($p < 0.001$). The Mobile Functional Cognition Program appeared to improve cognitive and occupational functioning for substance abusers. The collaboration model with NGO settings could facilitate their accessibility to rehabilitation, so as to ensure rapid response to rehabilitation need. Randomized controlled trial is called for studying the effectiveness of the program.