



Service Priorities and Programmes
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A new dimension of memory enhancement for persons with mental illness – the Prospective Memory Training Program (CogSMART)

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Introduction

Prospective memory (PM) is the memory involved in remembering to undertake activities in the future. It is proven to have great implications in successful execution of many tasks in daily life. In everyday living, people who complained of memory deficit always give examples of PM failures. Daily functioning would be enhanced if people can adopt effective PM strategies. Cognitive compensation training works around cognitive impairments of the individuals and induces brain plasticity. It is also a recovery-orientated program which aims at linking strategies use to accomplish individuals' life roles and their recovery goals in daily life such as work, social life or health.

Objectives

A Cognitive Symptom Management and Rehabilitation Program (CogSMART) was adopted to empower and enhance clients with PM difficulties to achieve their best possible functioning in daily living. It comprised of training on compensatory cognitive strategies for effective memory aids use such as calendar as well as short-term PM strategies. Conversational attention training was also included as one of the training component in the program. These training components aimed at helping clients to plan their work or school activities effectively, remembering the conversations better and efficiently prioritizing daily tasks. Home exercises were designed to help participants generalizing the strategies into their everyday lives and also building up certain habit.

Methodology

Clients attending Psychiatric Day Hospital or Occupational Therapy Workshop in United Christian Hospital, who subjectively complained of PM deficits in Activity of daily living (ADL) and/or Instrumental activity of daily living (IADL) tasks, were recruited to CogSMART program. This program consisted of 4 weekly one hour group and daily home assignment, including cognitive strategies and PM strategies for practising at home and in community. It facilitated participants to build up habit in using the captioned strategies. Daily log book was used to promote the compliance of program. Pre-post treatment evaluation with Assessment of Prospective Memory

(APM) and Chinese version of the Cambridge Prospective Memory Test (CAM-PROMPT-C) were adopted.

Result

15 participants (9 male, 6 female) with mean age of 43.75 ± 11.748 years had completed the treatment from January 2015 to December 2015. Paired-sample T test showed significant improvement in post treatment CAM-PROMPT-C ($p=0.028$) and APM ($p=0.002$). The mean score of Basic ADL and Instrumental ADL were improved. The mean self-rated satisfaction score on the treatment group was 8.36 out of 10 point scales (with 1 least satisfied and 10 most satisfied). To conclude, CogSMART is an effective and practical training package in improving PM and it brought a new important dimension in cognitive rehabilitation for persons with mental illness.