

Breaking language barriers: Lessons from advancements in rehabilitation of Chinese aphasia and related neurogenic populations

Session 4: Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) for Chinese individuals with dementia and aphasia

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Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) is an evidence-based therapy targeting cognitive function. It consists of cognitive activities which do not involve practice of specific cognitive modalities (Clare et al., 2003). This session focuses on introducing the cultural adaptation of the CST program to be conducted in Cantonese-speakers with acquired neurogenic communication disorders in Hong Kong. First, a group of 68 individuals diagnosed with mild or moderate dementia participated in a comprehensive CST program consisting of 14 sessions. Correlations between global coherence in personal narratives and episodic memory following the CST training was observed. There was also a significant improvement of informativeness in the participants' spoken discourse, which was sustained over time. Overall, participants showed greater improvement in their ability to describe sequential pictures compared to personal narratives. The CST program also showed potential in delaying the decline of verbal short-term memory but did not enhance episodic memory. Interestingly, participants' level of engagement in communication acted as a predictor for informativeness. In another study, the interactions between the facilitator and participants with dementia in 140 virtual CST sessions taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic were captured and analyzed quantitatively via the Verbal and Nonverbal Interactions Scale for Caregivers (VNVIS-CG; Williams & Parker, 2012; Coleman et al., 2022). Verbal acts/strategies demonstrated by the facilitator, which promoted the verbal output of the participants with dementia and effectively resolved communication breakdown during virtual CST sessions, were identified. The implications of these findings for enhancing CST treatment outcomes and facilitator training will be discussed.

Selected References

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