Cognitive Rehabilitation Interventions

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Cognitive rehabilitation is an evidence-based treatment for addressing neurocognitive impairments associated with conditions such as traumatic brain injury. Such interventions aim to address the person’s overall functioning and quality of life rather than being limited to abstract cognitive performance. In the past few years, several studies have been published in Psycho-Oncology regarding cognitive rehabilitation interventions for adults who experience cancer and cancer treatment-related cognitive dysfunction. The Memory and Attention Adaptation Training program, a brief individual intervention using cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) principles, has been associated with improved subjective and objective cognitive performance and quality of life in a single-arm pilot study with breast cancer survivors following chemotherapy (published in 2007), as well as with improved verbal memory and spiritual quality of life in a subsequent randomised clinical trial (RCT), published in 2012. A brief group CBT intervention developed by a separate research team, Responding to Cognitive Concerns (“ReCog”), similarly has shown improved objective and subjective cognitive performance and quality of life in an initial non-randomised pilot study with cancer survivors who had experienced varied tumour types and treatments, compared with cancer survivors who did not receive the intervention and with healthy control participants (2013). Recently, the outcomes from ReCog have been replicated in an RCT (manuscript in preparation), providing further evidence that group cognitive rehabilitation can contribute to improved objective and subjective cognitive performance and quality of life in cancer survivors of non-CNS tumours. The RCT has also more closely examined potential psychological mechanisms contributing to cognitive function, including illness perceptions and cognitive self-efficacy. These latest results will be discussed in relation to the real world issues that patients with cognitive difficulties report.

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