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Influence of a Relaxation Program, Cognitive Training and a Combination of Both Intervention Forms On Neuropsychological and Affective Parameters in Elderly Care Home Residents

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Introduction:

Evaluation of non-medical interventions on cognitive and emotional competence in old age is among the goals of research in clinical gerontopsychology.

Aims:

The goals of our study were to assess the impact of and analyze the differences between a cognitive training program, relaxation training according to Jacobson and a combination of both forms of intervention on cognitive performance, well-being and pain in older people.

Methods:

26 care home residents (group 1) underwent the Jacobson relaxation training first, followed by a combination of relaxation and cognitive training. 24 participants (group 2) underwent a cognitive training program in the first instance followed by the combined intervention. Various psychological tests were implemented at three time points of measurement.

Results:

- Significant improvement in dementia screening, in visual short-term memory and working memory both after the relaxation training only as also after combination training
- Relevant improved performance in ultra short-term memory after combination training
- Significant reduction in depression scores in both study groups
- Relevant improvement in state of well-being after all training variants

Conclusion

Jacobson relaxation has a markedly stronger positive effect in optimizing the cognitive and emotional status of elderly persons compared to the more frequently propagandized and implemented cognitive training.