

ASSESSMENT OF A NEW MEMORY TRAINING INSTRUMENT FOR PATIENTS WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA

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Objective: The goal of this study is to test the efficacy of the Memory Module of the REHACOP (Cognitive Training Program for Psychosis, Ojeda, Peña, 2006), in the improvement of cognition in patients with chronic schizophrenia (CS). Chronic patients present a moderate to severe cognitive performance on verbal memory and the severity of the illness and variables associated to the course of the diagnosis prevent them from improving cognition with traditional treatments.

Methods: 57 patients with CS (illness duration, 10.17 ± 7.22) were allocated randomly into either REHACOP (N=27) or control group (N=30). The REHACOP group received memory training with structured sessions 3 times per week for 8 weeks. Control group attended occupational therapy with the same frequency and timetables. Verbal Learning and Memory (Hopkins Verbal Learning Test; HVLT) and Working Memory (Digits Backwards from WAIS-III) were assessed at baseline and after the intervention.

Results: Repeated measures of MANOVA showed that the interaction term groupXtime was significant for all the memory measures, suggesting REHACOP group improved significantly when compared to controls. Specifically, the interaction term F value was significant for HVLT learning ($F=6.78$, $p < 0.01$), HVLT Long-term memory ($F=7.02$, $p < 0.01$) and working memory (Digits Backward ($F=10.04$, $p < 0.01$), and Sum ($F=11.39$, $p < 0.01$).

Conclusions: Patients with CS improved significantly in all memory impairments when compared to those receiving other treatment. This study supports the efficacy of the REHACOP in the intervention of memory impairments in patients with schizophrenia, in spite of the severity.