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Supporting Persons with Dementia and Their Care-givers' Everyday Occupations Through Activity Scheduling

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Introduction : The Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) provides a systematic, organized framework identifying issues of specific importance in occupational therapy. It is a useful model for assessing occupational function and for generating strategies for intervention in the older adults with dementia and their care-givers. Activity scheduling as a core component of effective care management and is an established component of evidence-based treatment for late-life depression. It is a behavioral treatment in which subjects learn to monitor their mood and daily activities, and how to increase the number of pleasant activities and to increase positive interactions with their environment. Dementia care giving is often associated with increase in depressive symptoms and strained relationships.

Objectives : To investigate how persons with dementia and their care-givers do everyday activities together and to evaluate the results from an intervention designed to encourage their mutual engagement through their active participation of activity scheduling.

Methodology : The study compared two telephone interventions by using a 3-month longitudinal randomized controlled trial.

Result & Outcome : For the first 2 weeks, all participants received the same psychoeducation program via telephone. For the following 10 weeks, ten weekly telephone follow-up calls were carried out and participants were randomized. For the control group, participants received ten weekly session of Health Education (HE). For the experimental group, participants received same set of HE and AS practice that focuses on pleasant event scheduling and improving communication. A group of 35 family with caregivers and people with dementia were recruited. 30 family (20 in the HealthED-AS group and 10 in the HealthED only group) completed the whole study. Results indicated AS showed significant behavioral activation for people with dementia, particularly in moderate dementia subjects (CDR > 2). Their daily active activity duration improved from 3 to 4.5 hours. Significant improvement in "relationships", "interest", and "daily responsibility", but not in "occupation" and "mind, body and spirituality" activities. AS shows can create pleasant events in daily living and enhance communications in their family.

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