

Cognitive Stimulation Therapy for Mild to Moderate Dementia



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“Engaging people living with dementia in stimulating online group activities has the potential to reduce cognitive decline without the risks of in-person gathering.”

RATIONALE: Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) is an evidence-based non-pharmacological group therapy shown to benefit people with mild to moderate dementia. Despite increasing availability of CST worldwide, access remains limited in the United States.

OBJECTIVE: To embed CST into the standard care protocol of diverse health care settings that serve people living with dementia. This pilot study will assess the acceptability of CST to people living with dementia, evaluate online delivery of CST, and determine the feasibility of routinely collecting patient-reported outcome measures in electronic health record systems.

SETTING: Two university-based healthcare systems will refer patients for CST to be delivered by a community-based partner staffed with Dementia Specialists.

POPULATION: Approximately 168 people living with mild to moderate dementia.

INTERVENTION: CST group therapy delivered over 14 sessions by occupational therapist using a virtual meeting platform. People living with mild to moderate dementia will be identified at each clinical site and randomly assigned for CST referral (vs no referral). Pre- and post-intervention data will be collected on primary and secondary clinical outcomes from the electronic health record.

OUTCOMES: Primary clinical outcome is change in cognitive status pre-post the intervention based on standardized cognitive measures (e.g. MoCA) obtained and documented in the electronic health records during the course of usual care by the health care systems. Secondary clinical outcome is prescribed medications. Outcomes to assess implementation feasibility will include recruitment, adherence, attrition, attendance, and acceptability.

IMPACT: This pilot study will inform the design of a large-scale embedded pragmatic clinical trial within health care systems nationwide that serve people living with mild to moderate dementia. Our long-term goals are for health care systems to routinely offer CST to people living with dementia to improve cognition and to routinely ascertain patient-reported outcome measures in electronic health records.