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**THE IMPACT OF A NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL REHABILITATION GROUP PROGRAM (NRGP) ON COGNITIVE AND EMOTIONAL FUNCTIONING IN INSTITUTIONALIZED ELDERLY**

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## INTRODUCTION

Cognitive rehabilitation techniques, reminiscence therapy, and reality orientation therapy, have shown an impact on cognition, life satisfaction, mood, and on the progression of cognitive decline in elderly.

## OBJECTIVES

To test the effectiveness of a NRGF on the cognitive and emotional functioning of institutionalized elderly.

## METHODS

**Design:** single blind randomized controlled study with paired groups.

**Participants:** Coimbra institutionalized elderly, aged between 64-92 (N = 88) with cognitive impairment no dementia, mostly women (75.0%).

**Intervention:** randomization of participants to the rehabilitation group/RG (n = 41) and to the comparison/waiting-list group/CG (n = 23). NRGF involved groups of five elders, and took 90 min. per day, once a week, for 10 weeks.

**Measurements:** Mini-Mental State Examination/MMSE, Frontal Evaluation Battery/FAB, Geriatric Depression Scale/GDS.

**Analysis:** We used general linear model with repeated measures analysis of variance.

## RESULTS

RG improved significantly on cognitive, and executive function ( $p < 0.001$ ), and CG worsened on cognitive, executive function, and mood ( $p < 0.01$ ). There was a significant effect on the MMSE, FAB, and GDS scores, after excluding pre-rehabilitation scores as covariates [ $F(1, 81) = 43.98, p < 0.001; \eta^2 = 0.35; F(1, 80) = 28.37, p < 0.001; \eta^2 = 0.26; F(1, 79) = 19.66, p < 0.001; \eta^2 = 0.20$ ].

## CONCLUSIONS

A NRGF including cognitive rehabilitation, reminiscence therapy, and reality orientation proved to be effective on cognitive and executive functioning, and on depressive symptoms of institutionalized elders with cognitive impairment no dementia.