Mental Focus and Memory

Jill Gebhard, MS OT CLVT LSVT
Jamie Smith, OTS LSVT
March 6, 2020

Objectives

• Participant will be able to identify common problem areas associated with dementia
• Participant will be able to state 3 activities to promote brain health
Normal Aging

- Forgetting a name
- Forgetting what day it is yet remembering it later
- Forgetting to make a payment one month
- Losing things from time to time
- Occasional word finding
- May have to pause momentarily when finding way

Dementia in Parkinson’s Disease

• According to the Alzheimer’s Association, 50-80% of individuals with Parkinson’s disease will develop dementia at some point.
• Up to 57% of individuals with Parkinson’s may develop mild cognitive impairment (MCI) within 5 years of diagnosis.
• Lower dopamine can lead to deficits in cognition, memory and learning, attention, and sleep.
• There are medications which may help with cognitive decline: Exelon, Aricept, and Razadyne.
Common Cognitive Difficulties in PD

- Attention
- Speed of mental processing
- Executive functioning/Problem solving
- Memory
- Language
- Visuospatial

Secondary Concerns

- Depression
- Social isolation
- Anxiety
- Fatigue
- Sleep
What can you do?

• STAY ACTIVE
• Exercise
• Nutrition
• Cognitive games
• Learning something new
• Stress reduction

Stay Active with Exercise!

• LSVT BIG and LOUD
• Boxing
• Dancing
• Swimming
• Walk around the block, grocery store, etc.
Nutrition

• Important for general health
• Can improve cognitive function
• Suggestions for diet: blueberries, cocoa, dark chocolate, tea, wine, DASH diet, MIND diet

Cognitive Activities

• Crossword puzzles or word search
• Read the newspaper
• Computer games/apps
Stress Reduction

- Planning ahead
- Relaxing environment
- Socializing
- Support group
- Exercise
- Mediation
- “Learn to laugh” and remain positive

Common Smartphone Applications

- Parkinson’s Disease Manager
- Control Your Parkinson Disease
- 9zest Parkinson’s Therapy
- Beats Medical Parkinsons Treat
- Luminosity
- CogniFit - Brain Training
- The Mindfulness App
- Headspace: Mediation and Sleep

For more details please see provided handout.
Tips for Caregivers

- People with dementia are more likely to become acutely confused after any operation. Watch out for sensitivity to medication.
- Stick to a routine or a structured schedule.
- Simplify the décor of the living area to help with distractibility or confusion.
- Use a nightlight to reduce visual misperceptions at night.
- Keep calm and still while talking with your loved one.
- Demonstrate your care and affection for the person with dementia.
- Keep in mind that paranoid attacks and false accusations are a product of the disease, not your loved one.
Where do we go from here?

- Speak with your primary care doctor or neurologist if you feel cognition is a concern
- Neuropsychological testing
- Occupational and/or speech therapies
- Remain active and engaged
- Support groups

Thank you!
References

- Alzheimer’s Association - [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)
- American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) - [https://www.apdaparkinson.org/](https://www.apdaparkinson.org/)

References

- National Parkinson’s Foundation - [www.parkinson.org](http://www.parkinson.org)
References


References
