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*Evaluation of the Effects of Reality Orientation in Whole Day Management of Elderly with Dementia*. Paper presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pan Pacific Conference on Rehabilitation, Hong Kong.

**Introduction:** Dementia is usually accompanied by a progressive deterioration in memory and orientation. Although the biological impairment itself is irreversible, its consequences in functional disabilities can often be improved by altering task requirements and environment demands in the daily life of the sufferers. Reality orientation (RO) is a widely adopted technique used in the rehabilitation of persons having time/place/person disorientation (Drummond et al, 1978). In a 'person-centred' approach, RO activities are categorised into: (1) cognitive task series (CTS-RO) that is carried out in an artificial environment (e.g. training room); and (2) daily routine training (DRT-RO) that is conducted in the real-life environment. CTR-RO is an intensive cognitive retraining programme developed by the authors' practice and conducted in small groups of 4-6 for about 30 min twice weekly. The group leader employs mnemonic that involves a series of logical steps for pair association of time/place/person with a visual image. During CTS-RO, the group members are encouraged to use interactive imagery accompanied by active verbalisation to facilitate image-to-time/place/person pair associations. The intensive training in the CTS-RO is followed up by DRT-RO in which all staff are encouraged to provide an active on-site reorientation of individuals when they interact with the client during activities of daily living and at leisure time. The DRT-RO begins everyday (except Sunday) with a 20-min morning assembly right after breakfast followed by a 24-hour RO. Verbal cues in combination with large signposts are employed as discriminative stimuli in the environment for the DRT-RO. **Method and Results:** Six elderly subjects with mild to moderate dementia participated in the study. Their scores in performing an image-to-person association test were taken before the implementation of the whole day programme as well as after a 3-month period. In addition, their ability in observing the time schedule was measured in terms of punctuality and accuracy with respect to the scheduled time and place. After three months of training, no significant improvement was obtained in the image-to-person test score. However, an improvement in observing the scheduled activities was found in all subjects. **Conclusion:** This study suggested that whole day programme of RO based on 'person-centred' approach enhanced the place and time orientation of elderly patients with mild to moderate dementia. However, a longer period of training may be required to demonstrate the effectiveness of the RO programme with respect to the image-to-person association.



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