The effects of cognitive remediation therapy using the frontal/executive program for treating chronic schizophrenia

Abstract

Purpose: Cognitive Remediation Therapy (CRT) is a new rehabilitation approach that was developed to improve aspects of cognitive functioning such as attention, memory, and executive function. We aimed to study the effects of one type of CRT, the Frontal/Executive Program (FEP), on cognitive function, social function, and psychiatric symptoms in people with chronic schizophrenia.

Patients and methods: Seventeen participants who gave consent were randomly assigned to an intervention group (n=8) or control group (n=9). The intervention consisted of 44 sessions of FEP over a period of approximately six months. Cognitive function, social function, and psychiatric symptoms were evaluated before and after the intervention and before and after a roughly six-month long period for controls.

Results: The present study showed improvements in Brief Assessment of Cognition in Schizophrenia-Japanese version (BACS-J) composite score and subscales of verbal memory and verbal fluency. Improvements were also observed in overall patient, informant, and interviewer evaluation in the Schizophrenia Cognition Rating Scale-Japanese version (SCoRS-J), total Life Assessment Scale for the Mentally Ill (LASMI) score, and total Positive And Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS) score. These results suggest that FEP improves outcomes in cognitive function tests, social function tests, and psychiatric symptom tests that are the target of this approach.

Conclusion: FEP may be a useful CRT tool for improving cognitive function, social function, and psychiatric symptom outcomes in patients with chronic schizophrenia. Future studies are needed to determine the duration of effects of FEP.