Approaches to Cognitive Stimulation in the Prevention of Dementia

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The prevalence of dementia and age-related cognitive impairment is rising due to an aging population worldwide. There is currently no effective pharmacological treatment, but cognitive activity programs could contribute to prevention and risk reduction. However, the results of intervention studies are inconclusive, which may be related to methodological issues. For example, the inconsistent use of umbrella categories to describe cognitive intervention strategies, such as cognitive training or cognitive rehabilitation, has led to confusion regarding their respective contents and efficacies. The interventions studied so far draw on a pool of common basic ingredients. Therefore, rather than focusing on a few high-level categories, it might be beneficial to examine the efficacy of more basic cognitive intervention ingredients, which form the building blocks of complex multi-strand cognitive intervention strategies. Here we suggested a novel format of collating basic cognitive intervention ingredients. Using a representative sample of review articles and treatment studies, we attempted to inventory the most commonly encountered ingredients. Finally, we discuss their suitability for individualized and group-based approaches, as well as the possibility for computerization.

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