

CASE STUDY

RECOS, a customized cognitive remediation training programme to improve cognitive performance in patients with mental illness

Problem – Challenge

Individuals suffering from mental illness including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or depressive disorder often experience cognitive deficits. These deficits may lead to severe disability in everyday life and have a negative impact on patient's adaptive and social competences. Moreover poor cognitive functioning in people with severe mental illness appears to contribute to lower levels of work.

Conventional treatments have limited effects on cognitive deficits. Therefore, improving cognitive abilities is essential for social and vocational recovery. A recent review of the relationship between cognitive deficits and functional outcomes has emphasized the importance of developing new treatment for these deficits.

Solution

Based on the principles of cognitive psychology, neuropsychology, psychopedagogy and cognitive behavioural therapy, RECOS – COgnitive REmediation for Schizophrenia – was developed by the Departement of Psychiatry of the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Vaudois in Lausanne. RECOS is an individualized cognitive rehabilitation treatment to take into account the cognitive heterogeneity characterizing this disorder. Before beginning cognitive training, functional consequences of cognitive troubles are evaluated with each patient using qualitative criteria. Interventions are aimed at concrete goals defined according to the patients' difficulties and discussed regularly throughout the therapy. RECOS exercises were designed to be engaging and similar to real life situations in order to facilitate generalization to everyday life skills and to enhance motivation. It includes both computer based and paper and pencil exercises. Recent studies show that RECOS therapy is effective in improving cognitive functioning and functional outcomes.

