

Enhancing Quality of Life for the Elderly and Their Caregivers: Exploring Low-Cost Therapeutic Strategy and Innovation

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Abstract : The aging of societies is a global phenomenon with significant social, economic, and medical implications. Numerous methods for promoting the health of the elderly, improving cognitive functions, and enhancing quality of life are discussed in the literature. The most employed method for activating the elderly is physical activity, which often includes not only standard exercise programs but also activities such as dance, tai chi, and yoga. However, the introduction of physical activity can be limited by the disabilities that frequently accompany individuals aged 65 and older. Other activation methods mentioned in the literature include animal-assisted therapy, plant therapy (hortitherapy), and the increasingly popular music therapy. All these therapeutic approaches typically require the involvement of an occupational therapist, which can be a financial burden for many nursing homes. One therapeutic method recommended for the elderly that does not require significant financial investment is reminiscence therapy, which involves recalling personal experiences and memories. Reminiscence therapy has been shown to increase self-esteem and reduce symptoms of depression by allowing seniors to revisit happy moments in their lives. A pilot study was conducted in Warsaw, Poland with a group of 30 nursing home residents as part of the Queen Silvia Nursing Award competition. Over the course of three months, medical students engaged in systematic correspondence with retired doctors residing in the nursing home. The results of this pilot study suggest that correspondence-based activation can be an effective and low-cost form of therapy. To fully assess and validate the benefits of this approach, further research should be conducted on a larger group of participants, using standardized scales to measure various psychological parameters.

Keywords : elderly, reminiscence therapy, nursing, gerontology

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