

A Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy at the Psychogeriatrics Unit of Vigo (Galicia, Spain)

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Key highlights:

- Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy is a non-pharmacological treatment that seeks to improve cognitive functions in Mild Cognitive Impairment.
- Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy programmes are used in day centers or residential facilities.
- The Psychogeriatrics Unit from the Psychiatry Service of Vigo (Galicia, Spain) has developed the first program integrated in the public health system.

Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy seeks to improve aspects of cognitive decline, including behavioral aspects, and aims to improve one's ability to adapt while encouraging autonomy. There are many types of these therapies and programmes which have evolved over time and incorporate computer and virtual reality techniques.

In Galicia (Spain), Cognitive rehabilitation Therapy programs are usually used in day centers or residential facilities, and do not exist as an offering within the public health system (SERGAS). The Psychogeriatrics Unit from the Psychiatry Service of Vigo has developed the only cognitive rehabilitation program for older adults integrated into the public health system. It is made up of a multidisciplinary team (Dr. Águeda Rojo, psychiatrist; Mrs. Nuria Carrera, Nurse Specialist in Mental Health and Mr. Telmo Ruibal, Clinical Psychologist). During a visit to the unit, we learned that their program began in May 2017. It is aimed for people with a diagnosis of Mild Cognitive Impairment, and individually for people with dementia in a very early stages. The project has been gaining capacity over

time, increasing from initially one computer license to three computer licenses at present.

The computer program is called GRADIOR, which addresses different cognitive functions, and the program starts at “baseline” or basal capacity. This program performs an analysis of the user’s progress and provides averages for each cognitive domain which can be uploaded to the patient’s history. The program duration is 6 months and consists of two 30 to 35 minutes sessions per week. The program duration has been limited due to a current waiting list but could be repeated in a year.

For referral, Dr. Rojo requires an established diagnosis and completion of a neuropsychological evaluation. If there is no evaluation, an initial neuropsychological assessment is performed (Camcog) at the beginning and conclusion of the program to track progress. Referrals for the program are from the Dementia Unit (Neurology), Geriatrics and from Psychiatry. Attrition from completing the program is often due to adherence problems (motivation, access difficulties) or to the existence of an abrupt or severe cognitive decline. Thus far there have been positive results of the program and a positive response from the patients.

What is Gradior?

Gradior is a cognitive rehabilitation program developed by the INTRAS Foundation, an entity dedicated to the treatment and research in Mental Illness, Neurodegenerative Diseases and Social Services. It is a computerized multimedia neuropsychological evaluation and rehabilitation system that allows training cognitive functions. The user interacts with a touch screen and follows a series of visual and sound instructions until completing the assigned tasks. This program was designed in 1999 and has evolved and been updated to the present version (2020 suite Gradior). There are multiple publications on its use, characteristics, and effectiveness.

For further reading:

Franco, M.; Jones, K.; Woods, B.; Gómez, P. (2009). “Gradior: A personalized computer-based cognitive training programme for early intervention in dementia”. En Moniz-Cook, E.; Manthorpe, J. (2009) Early Psychosocial interventions in Dementia. Evidence-based practice. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. London. UK

Irazoki, E., Contreras-Somoza, L.M.; Toribio-Guzmán, J.M.; Jenaro-Río, C.; van der Roest, H.; Franco-Martín, M (2020). “Technologies for Cognitive Training and Cognitive Rehabilitation for People With Mild Cognitive Impairment and Dementia. A Systematic Review”. *Frontiers in Psychology*, DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00648

<https://www.gradior.es/>



Mrs. Nuria Carrera (Mental Health Nurse) and Dr. Águeda Rojo (Old Age Psychiatrist).



Rehabilitation Cognitive Therapy