

AOD client concerns and wishes regarding cognitive impairment treatment

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Introduction: Cognitive impairment is prevalent among individuals seeking Alcohol or Other Drug (AOD) treatment, impacting daily functioning and treatment outcomes. However, little is known about clients' perceptions of their cognitive abilities and their willingness to engage in targeted cognitive rehabilitation interventions. This study aims to explore AOD clients' concerns about cognition and their interest in participating in cognitive rehabilitation programs.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted involving 159 participants from five New South Wales Health Alcohol and Drug Services. The study was designed to understand their cognitive concerns, interest in brain training, preferred methods of intervention, and what outcomes they wanted to achieve. In addition, it compared their personal cognitive complaints with their recent Montreal Cognitive Assessment medical scores to check for any correlation.

Key Findings: The study involved mostly male subjects (64.8%), averaging 45.55 in age. The primary treatments were for alcohol (83.6%) and opiates (78.0%). Subjects experienced cognitive challenges (23.9%-56.0%) but showed high interest (95.4%) in brain training. They preferred individual one-hour sessions weekly (42.1% and 81.1% respectively). Preferred activities were computerized programs and exercises (39.0% and 34.6% respectively). Most (75.5%) didn't need assistance and had technology access (57.2%-87.4%). Desired improvements included memory, thinking, daily functioning and life skills (62.9%-69.2%).

Discussions and Conclusions: The study found that patients in substance abuse treatment had significant cognitive concerns and were interested in cognitive rehabilitation. They preferred individual, weekly, one-hour sessions. Implementing such a program could potentially address cognitive issues and improve cognitive function in this group.

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