

'BRAINGYM': EVALUATING THE FEASIBILITY AND EFFICACY OF A NEAR COGNITIVE REMEDIATION PROGRAM IN RESIDENTIAL SUBSTANCE USE REHABILITATION

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Introduction and Aims: There are high rates of cognitive impairment amongst those seeking rehabilitation for substance use problems, limiting treatment engagement and response, and yet this problem is not routinely recognized or addressed in rehabilitation programs. We are implementing a trial of cognitive remediation (CR) within a rural residential rehabilitation program and evaluating the efficacy of the intervention and the feasibility of incorporating CR into routine care.

The CR intervention we are implementing, the Neuropsychological and Educational Approach to cognitive Remediation (NEAR; Medalia et al., 2018) has a strong evidence base in a range of psychiatric populations but has not yet been formally evaluated in an AOD population. This paper describes the application of the NEAR model in the AOD rehabilitation setting and outlines our evaluation framework.

Design and Methods: Our evaluation is a non-randomised between-group comparison, comparing outcomes for residents receiving standard residential rehabilitation treatment with residents receiving standard treatment plus NEAR cognitive remediation, delivered in three hour-long groups per week. The feasibility outcomes include cognitive functioning, substance use, mental health and functional outcomes, and will be assessed at three data points: admission, program completion (two months post admission) and follow up (six months post admission). The feasibility outcomes include cost, treatment fidelity, client satisfaction, and acceptability of the intervention to staff.

Results: Results of the evaluation will be available by June 2020.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Dr Medalia discloses a royalty from Oxford University Press and consulting fees from Takeda Pharmaceuticals, Forum Pharmaceuticals, and Daiinippon Sumitomo Pharma Inc. The other authors have no industry funding sources to disclose.