

Study Proves Surprising Benefits of Mental Training in the Elderly

Provider of residential care communities, alternative to aged care facilities, shares the different benefits the elderly can get from mental training.

Australia, 4 March 2014 - Recently, the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society published the results of a ten-year experiment by an organisation called ACTIVE. The acronym stands for "Advanced Cognitive Training for Independent and Vital Elderly" and the experiment was performed under the aegis and sponsorship of two US agencies: the National Institute of Nursing Research in cooperation with the National Institute on Ageing.

The study was conducted by Michael Marsiske, who teaches at the University of Florida as an Associate Professor of Clinical and Health Psychology. Mr Marsiske says that the study is the first one to ever prove benefits lasting for ten years, with the previous longest being seven years.

The study was conducted on 2,832 participants ranging in age from 65 to 96 years of age. They were separated into three different groups, each receiving ten training sessions. They were divided between memory exercises, reasoning and speed of processing. The sessions were conducted over a period between five and six weeks with the sessions lasting for durations of 60-75 minutes.

Some of the participants received what was called "booster training" between approximately one and three years after the original sessions, while a control group received no extra training. Patients were tested for retention of benefits after two, three, five and ten years.

The ten year numbers were the most encouraging and a source of optimism for researchers and participants alike. Ten years after the original training, 75% of those who had taken the training in reasoning still performed on a higher level than the baseline levels taken before the original training. 62% of the control group who had no training performed higher.

The speed of processing training showed similar results: 70% performed better compared to 60% of those in the control group. While those with memory training didn't score better than the control group in testing, they were able to more easily perform daily tasks.

Due to the success of the study, researchers from ACTIVE are busy trying to create a series of exercises that can be performed from one's home. Mr Marsiske and the other staffers feel that simply doing crossword puzzles isn't enough to keep one sharp and that the true "secret" to staying vital in old age is doing new things.

Phil Usher, co-founder of Tall Trees Care Communities, was not surprised by the findings. According to Mr Usher, "Honestly, this study, while groundbreaking, isn't something my mum didn't already know."

Mr Usher continued, "When we created Tall Trees Care Communities, we asked our mums what they wanted in a care community. They told us they wanted to retain their independence and their dignity. They didn't say it literally, but in so many words, they didn't want to feel like they were waiting to die. We have worked very hard to make Tall Trees Care Communities into the kind of place where our mums could thrive and live their golden years like golden years instead of the way people live in traditional aged care facilities."

Mr Usher concluded, "At Tall Trees, one of our main areas of focus is providing our residents with every opportunity to experience new things, both mentally and physically. We have obtained great results."

Tall Trees Care Communities provide a refreshing alternative to aged care facilities, with five locations in the Brisbane and Gold Coast areas. They value the independence and dignity of their residents and provide access to elite health care at the push of a button. For more information, call (07) 3442 9378 or visit their website: <http://talltrees.net.au/>.

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