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New Strategies for Post-Stroke Rehabilitation: The MindFit Project

The MindFit Project, funded by the La Marató de TV3 Foundation, aims to mitigate the physical, emotional, and cognitive sequelae of stroke victims through mindfulness or physical exercise with cognitive training. The interviews of the participants in these training sessions express improvements in memory and attention, as well as emotional and physical benefits.

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Every 6 minutes, a person in Spain suffers a stroke, affecting approximately 120,000 people annually. This brain disorder, caused by an interruption in blood flow to the brain, often leaves physical, emotional, and cognitive sequelae that profoundly impact quality of life. Despite advances in acute treatment, post-stroke rehabilitation still focuses primarily on physical aspects, leaving unmet needs during chronic phases. The MindFit Project, a pioneering clinical trial funded by the La Marató de TV3 Foundation, offers a new perspective through combined and accessible interventions.

This project explores whether combining mindfulness interventions (stress reduction based on mindful attention) or physical exercise with computerized cognitive training provided superior benefits compared to cognitive training alone. The 141 participants were assigned to three groups: cognitive training with mindfulness, cognitive training with physical exercise, and cognitive training alone. The interventions lasted 12 weeks, with five weekly sessions conducted remotely, combining individual and group formats.

The qualitative sub-study, published in Complementary Therapies in Medicine, delved into the experiences of 27 participants with a median age of 58 years and 30 months post-stroke. Through interviews, the study analyzed how these interventions impacted their cognitive functions and quality of life.

All groups experienced improvements in memory and attention thanks to cognitive training, translating into practical benefits for daily tasks such as reading, remembering events, or managing finances. Moreover, the combined interventions provided additional specific benefits: mindfulness helped with emotional regulation, acceptance of limitations, and stress management, while physical exercise improved strength, balance, and physical autonomy, boosting confidence in daily activities and reducing the fear of falling.

The group format fostered emotional support and motivation, helping participants overcome the isolation often associated with stroke. At the same time, the digital platform facilitated access, removing geographical and physical barriers, especially relevant for patients with reduced mobility or those living in rural areas.

These findings emphasize the value of comprehensive rehabilitation that combines physical, emotional, cognitive, and group support strategies, demonstrating that technology can democratize access to more effective, accessible, and inclusive treatments.

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