

Memory Care Residents and Indoor Ecotherapy

Dementia is a devastating disease that is impacting the lives of millions of Americans over the age of 65. Medications which are associated with negative side effects, are often used to manage agitated and aggressive behaviors for people with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of memory loss, who reside in memory care facility (Madhusoodanan & Ting, 2014).

Environmental psychologists have found that exposure to nature or "ecotherapy" has beneficial effects for nursing home residents with dementia, and that the viewing photos of nature, combined with peaceful music, a form of "indoor ecotherapy", helped calm agitated dementia residents (Chung, Choi, Kim, 2015).

To investigate the potential benefits of "indoor ecotherapy", this study analyzed the effects of ten memory care residents viewing a video of nature photos, combined with soothing music. The residents were measured before and after viewing the video using a "tranquility scale" and staff observations of each resident before and after were used as part of the analysis. Tranquility levels reported by residents was higher after the intervention than before the intervention. Tranquility levels among residents perceived by staff members was higher after the intervention. A non-significant difference occurred between the levels reported by residents and the residents' levels reported by staff members before and after the intervention.

The positive benefits of this study support the use of "indoor ecotherapy" as an intervention, and as an alternative to use of medications, for resident residing in a memory care facility. The findings provide useful information for health care management and recreational therapy applications that may enhance the quality of life, for residents residing in a memory care facility.

References:

Chung, J., Choi, S., & Kim, J. (2016). Experience of media presentations for the alleviation of agitation and emotional distress among dementia patients in a long-term nursing facility.

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Madhusoodanan, S., & Ting, M. B. (2014). Pharmacological management of behavioral symptoms associated with dementia. *World Journal of Psychiatry*, 4(4), 72–79.

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