



Elderly for Dementia - “Mahjong”

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Dementia is a clinical syndrome characterized by a progressive cognitive decline. It interferes with the ability to function independently, such as impairing to remember, thinking, or making decisions.¹ There is no treatment available to cure dementia which occurs among people aged over 65, and the risk of dementia increases significantly with age. According to the Hong Kong Hospital Authority, the prevalence rates of dementia in the elderly are estimated to be at 5%-8% among persons aged over 65, and at 20%-30% among those aged over 80. As the population continues to age, the number of older adults with dementia will increase proportionally to 300,000 by 2039.²

“Mahjong” is a national quintessence in China who’s encouraged the elderly to play this for their brain practice to prevent dementia recently. Growing evidence has shown that mahjong helped improve elderly memory skills and sharpen the mind (Table 1).

The above information demonstrates mahjong is suitable for the treatment of elderly dementia. How can we enhance its effectiveness? There is a strategy briefly described. Why don’t we combine mahjong with tai chi or qigong in the next investigation for further development? The basic hypothesis is mahjong, tai chi, or qigong are mental and physical exercises that help to prevent and treat elderly dementia, measured by MMSE, FAB, TMT, and GDS over 12 to 24 weeks. Much more works need to be done to confirm the function of mahjong for dementia. Up to the present, dementia is no treatment, and drug with side effects, thus, mental and physical exercises are good choices for elderly care.

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	Cheng ST et al. (2006) ³	Machishima K et al. (2014) ⁴	Zhang H et al. (2020) ⁵	Cheng ST et al. (2014) ⁶
Objective	The effect of mahjong on the cognitive functioning of persons with dementia	Mahjong facilitate episodic memory, attention, and executive functions	Play mahjong may improve attention and memory in elderly people	Compare mahjong and physical exercises, such as tai chi on cognitive performance in persons with dementia
Participants	62 older persons with age 80	89 older persons with age 81	56 older persons with age 74	110 older persons
Duration of time	Fourth times per week over a six-month	Once a week over 20 weeks	Three times a week over 12 weeks	Three times a week over 12 weeks
Measurements	Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE)	MMSE Frontal Assessment Battery at Bedside (FAB) Trail Making Test (TMT) Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS)	Montreal Cognitive Assessment—Beijing (MoCA-B) Shape Trail Test (STT) Functional Activities Questionnaire (FAQ)	MMSE
Results & Significance	Not require professional supervision Effective for the elderly from mild-to-moderate dementia, especially in verbal memory and social communication Constant practice for the older adults	Not only affected cognitive functions Show a positive effect on the brain Provide opportunities to enjoy social life among the healthy elderly	Slow down or reversed the progression of cognitive decline and suitable for traumatic brain injury	No significant change between mahjong and tai chi Preserve functioning or delay decline in certain cognitive domains, even in those with significant cognitive impairment

Table 1. Mahjong Exercise Related to Elderly Dementia.

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