

Effects of Cognitive Enhancement Therapy on Employment Outcomes in Early Schizophrenia: Results From a 2-Year Randomized Trial in Research on Social Work Practice 21(1) 32-42

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Objective: To examine the effects of psychosocial cognitive rehabilitation on employment outcomes in a randomized controlled trial for individuals with early course schizophrenia.

Method: Early course schizophrenia outpatients (N 58) were randomly assigned to cognitive enhancement therapy (CET) or an enriched supportive therapy (EST) control and treated for 2 years. Comprehensive data on cognition and employment were collected annually.

Results: Individuals treated with CET were significantly more likely to be competitively employed, had greater earnings from employment, and were more satisfied with their employment status by the end of treatment compared to EST recipients. Mediator analyses revealed that improvements in both social and nonsocial cognition mediated CET effects on employment.

Conclusion: CET can help facilitate employment in early schizophrenia by addressing the cognitive impairments that limit functioning in the disorder. Inclusion of cognitive rehabilitation in social work practice can support more optimal functional recovery from schizophrenia.

Variable	CET (N = 24)		EST (N = 22)	
	N	%	N	%
Competitively employed	13	54	4	18
Job status				
Full time	6	25	3	14
Part time	7	29	1	5
Employment pattern				
Achieved employment	10	42	2	9
Maintained employment	3	12	2	9
Lost employment	0	0	6	27
Job category ^a				
Professional	1	5	0	0
Clerical/sales	5	23	1	5
Skilled manual labor	1	5	0	0
Unskilled labor	4	18	3	14
	M	SD	M	SD
Weekly earnings	207.92	337.97	69.77	156.47
Satisfaction with employment status ^b	2.46	1.56	3.77	1.69