

Effectiveness of cognitive remediation for female inmates: a pilot study

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Abstract

There is considerable evidence that neurocognitive deficits are frequent among incarcerated offenders. However, current correctional programming does not directly seek to remediate deficits in offenders' neurocognitive deficits. In this pilot project, we sought to treat neurocognitive deficits in incarcerated Portuguese adult women offenders (n = 28) using cognitive remediation to target cognitive flexibility, memory, and planning. Statistically significant positive changes, with medium to large effect sizes, were discovered across several neurocognitive domains, including attention, speed of processing, verbal learning and memory, cognitive flexibility, and planning. We also found a decrease in the negative emotional states of depression, anxiety, tension/stress, and on disturbed behavior in prison. Cognitive remediation has the potential to enhance the neurocognitive functioning of incarcerated women. Controlled research is needed to establish cognitive remediation fully as an intervention for the treatment of neurocognitive deficits of incarcerated women.