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Cognitive Neurorehabilitation during aging and Alzheimer's disease: Is it effective?

The growing evidence that our environment, behaviours, and emotions may either increase the rate of neuronal death, or facilitate neurogenesis, opens up new horizons for neurorehabilitation. The brain stimulation can cause an increase in cortical thickness, neuronal branching and number of synapses. We already know that the adult brain can show large experience-dependent change in neural circuits. Since neuronal plasticity is preserved to some extent in older people and Alzheimer's patients, we try to reactivate atrophic neurons or regenerate synapses through Cognitive Neurorehabilitation. Every day throughout much of the world, thousands of therapists try to shape recovery in the damaged brains. They offer structured experience through cognitive training or cognitive stimulation. However, we must know how exactly neurorehabilitation works in order to design effective therapeutic programmes along scientific principles. Experience-dependent plastic reorganization depends heavily on the level of attention skills. Therefore, the enhancement of attention is the primary goal. It might have a further significance, however, as an intervening step in enhancing other types of cognitive, motor and perceptual function, given that attention is a key element of new learning. In the third millennium, cross-disciplinary neuroscientific research is likely to be the key to advancing our understanding of brain plasticity.

Speaker Biography

Kounti F has completed her PhD in Cognitive psychology in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. She is a Cognitive neuropsychologist and the dementia lead of BRINA,-Brains In Action UK. She has co-authored 9 books in relation to older people, dementia diagnosis, cognitive training and care giving topics. Also, she has designed and tested more than 20 different cognitive training programs for older people aiming in dementia prevention and delay. She has delivered 27 publications in prestigious scientific journals worldwide. She had been the dementia lead of 4-day Clinics operating under the Greek Ministry of Health and the Greek Alzheimer's Disease Association. Since 1995 she co-founded, and has been serving as a board member of, the Alzheimer's Disease Association and later the Federation of Alzheimer's disease in Greece.

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