

# Effectiveness of the Montessori Method for Dementia Patients

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## Abstract

Dementia is characterized by a progressive decline in memory and other cognitive domains that can interfere with daily living and independent functioning. Symptoms associated with dementia continue to progress in severity until death occurs. This poster will present the available data on The Montessori Program, a specific treatment method that was initially researched more than twenty years ago and is currently being utilized around the globe in more than ten countries. In 1907, Dr. Maria Montessori discovered that experiential learning led to a deeper understanding of language, mathematics, science, music, social interactions, and much more. Montessori is a method of education that is based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning, and collaborative play. Montessori is used in classrooms where children make creative choices in their learning, while the classroom and highly-trained teacher offer age-appropriate activities to guide the process. This poster will review research surrounding this treatment method and its clinical practice when treating those with dementia and the efficacy behind the method.

## Learner Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to explain the basis and concept of the Montessori Program
2. Participants will be able to describe various ways the Montessori Program can be utilized as an effective treatment method for people with dementia
3. Participants will be able to identify the benefits of utilizing the Montessori Method for people with Dementia

## Overview

- ❖ Dementia is a general term for loss of memory, language, problem-solving and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life.
- ❖ Even though there are no specific interventions to treat dementia, research shows that the Montessori program can be effective in reducing and preventing challenging behaviors associated with dementia.
- ❖ Montessori-based interventions stress the non-verbal part of task coordination that include all the senses in the activities. When caregivers develop and implement activities that are in accord with the cognition and activities of daily living ability of elders with dementia, this planning helps to prevent the frustrations experienced by elders with dementia when they are expected to do tasks that exceed their abilities.
- ❖ Activities should enable individuals to be as independent as possible.
- ❖ The Montessori method for dementia has been facilitated in both one-on-one and in small and large group settings.
- ❖ Montessori-based activities are regarded as particularly suited for use with persons with dementia for several reasons. People need high self-esteem and the chance to make meaningful contributions to their community (Article 3)

## Evidence-Based Research

- ❖ One of the challenges in dementia care is providing meaningful social activities that are reflective of the individual's interests and abilities.
- ❖ Research has provided clear evidence of increased levels of engagement in activities when Montessori approaches are implemented and associated decreases in the behaviors of unmet needs when people are actively engaged in meaningful activity.

Measure	Group	Time of test			
		Pre-test	Posttest one	Posttest two	
Constructive engagement	Treatment	118 (128)	398 (180)	394 (193)	<b>152 (115)</b>
	Control	93 (90)	98 (101)	113 (103)	
Passive engagement	Treatment	352 (117)	201 (181)	206 (193)	<b>264 (136)</b>
	Control	398 (166)	427 (138)	364 (142)	

n = 9 for treatment (Montessori-based programming) group; n = 10 for controls  
SDs are shown in parentheses  
600 total seconds were possible (10-minute observations)  
Numbers in bold represent treatment group taking part in regular (i.e., control condition) adult day care programming at Posttest two

## Future Research

- ❖ Evidenced-based research indicates that the Montessori program has been implemented by staff, family members, and volunteers. However, more research is needed to compare and contrast these approaches and to examine the implementation barriers to each.
- ❖ Future research is needed to establish an effective training protocol for different facilitators of Montessori program.

## References



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