

A longitudinal study of cognitive impairments in relation to personal activities in daily life - The Gothenburg Cognitive Stroke Study in Elderly

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Introduction: Cognitive impairments pre- and poststroke such as understanding information, using memory, talking, learning and solving problems may contribute to limitations in P-ADL in elderly persons after stroke. This indicates that it is important to assess cognition in relation to everyday life activities. No study has been found concerning how cognitive impairment prestroke influenced P-ADL 12 months after stroke for the elderly persons. **Objective:** To compare differences in elderly persons' performance of P-ADL with cognitive impairments before and directly after stroke with those without cognitive impairments. **Method:** Instruments used were: The Barthel Index for assessment of P-ADL, Åstrands questionnaire for cognitive status before stroke, Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE) and a neuropsychological test battery for patients' cognitive status after stroke. **Result:** Neither the persons with cognitive impairments before stroke or directly after stroke had improved significantly in P-ADL at the 12 months assessment, while persons with intact cognition did improve significantly. Fifty up to seventy percent of the group had cognitive impairments in memory, logical deductive ability, speed and attention and executive function. **Conclusion:** The elderly persons with cognitive impairments in the acute care still had problems performing P-ADL 12 months after stroke. This vulnerable group of elderly suffering from stroke most probably needs more time to learn, to use special strategies in their rehabilitation. **Contribution to practice:** Occupational therapists need to learn more about how cognitive impairments influence performance in everyday activities in order to enable patients to learn different strategies.