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IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

Barriers and Facilitators to implementation of Cognitive Stimulation Therapy for People Dementia in Ireland

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NCI Research Day 2024

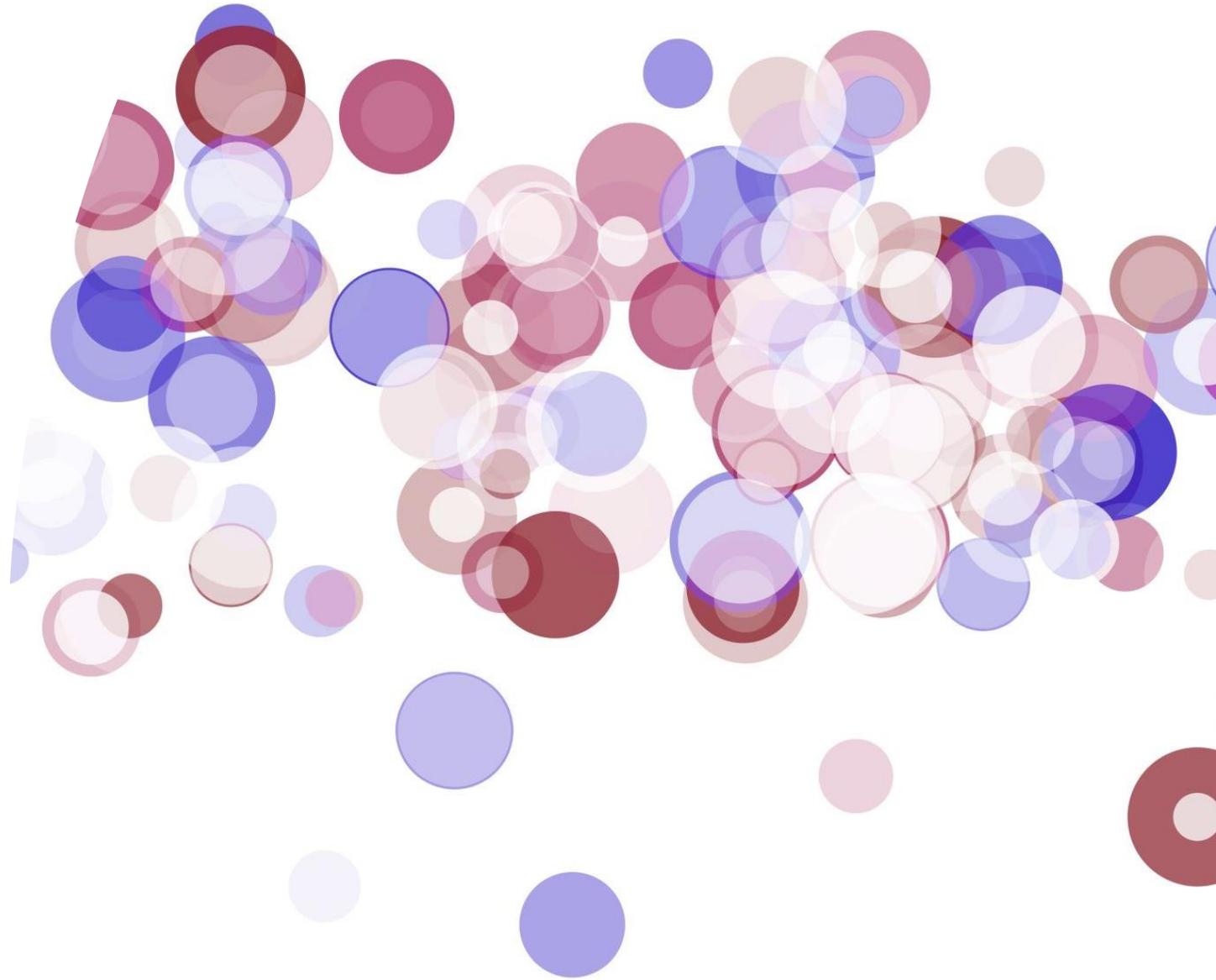
What is Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST)?

- 7-week group-based intervention:
- People living with dementia come together and work with a trained facilitator engaging in different activities to trigger thinking and concentration.
- CST improves:
 - Cognitive function
 - Confidence and engagement
 - Effects comparable to Donepezil and other similar medications



CST in Ireland

- Early interventions recommended in the National Dementia Strategy and CST named in the HSE Model of Care for Dementia.
- >400 people trained to deliver CST
- Groups running in some areas
- 'Implementation gap'



FAB-CST

Facilitators and Barriers to implementing Cognitive Stimulation Therapy groups for people with dementia in Ireland (IRC Funded)

- Gathered information on when/where CST is being offered and explored barriers to its implementation →
- Working with the HSE and National Dementia Office to provide recommendations to facilitate greater availability of CST in Ireland



Who were our participants?

Surveyed 75* Trained CST Practitioners

- *Data included from $n=62$
- 91.9% female
- Dementia advisors/dementia specialists (43.5%); SLTs/OTs (24.2%)
- Worked with PLwD daily/weekly (67.7%)
- Or with carers/families (24.2%)

Interviewed 5 PLwD & 5 Family

- PLwD aged 51-89 years (40% female)
- Family aged 33-59 years (80% female)
- Alzheimer's; younger onset; PCA; vascular
- Average age at diagnosis was 68.8 years (range 50-83 years)

Interviewed 5 HCPs & 5 PPs

- 60% female
- Experts working in dementia services or dementia-related policy roles
- HCPs - various HSE roles
- PPs - managers, directors, CEOs in government organisations & NGO/charity/advocacy organisations

What did we
find?

Cognitive Stimulation Therapy for People with Dementia

An evaluation of facilitators and barriers to
intervention delivery in Ireland

Summary Report: Study Findings

Trained CST Practitioners: *Quantitative Data*

- Just over half (54.8%) had run CST groups following their training
- Among those who had run groups, about half (48.5%) had delivered CST to less than 10 people
- CST was an acceptable, effective and likely to improve the lives of those with dementia.





Trained CST Practitioners: *Qualitative Themes*

- **Awareness:**
- *“Better understanding of value of CST by Management and this will then filter down and help get CST programs prioritized”*
- **Resources and Logistics**
- *“More admin support to source venues, liaise with people with dementia*

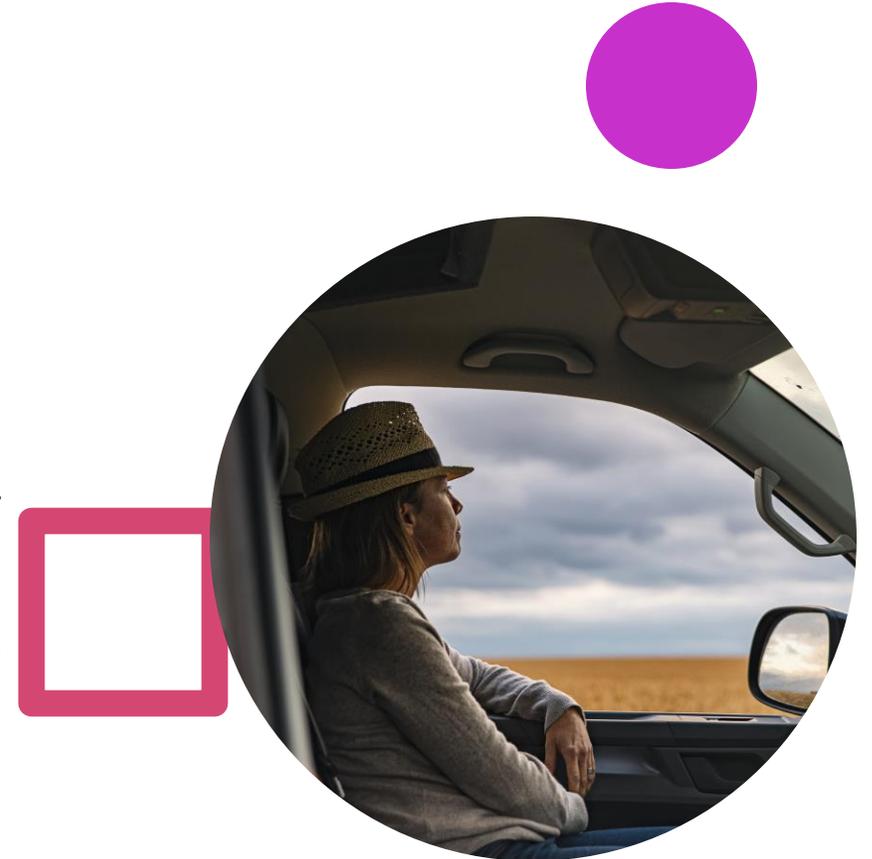
People living with dementia & family/carers

Acceptability of CST: *“It's definitely recommended in the UK and one of the best nonpharmacological interventions with the greatest success rate and yeah, I think it sounds really good.”*

Resources and Practical Considerations: *“If it's somewhere nearby that it's not too much of trek, too much of an ordeal.”*

Knowledge and Awareness: *“I think like myself, people are not aware of what's available. I mean, I definitely wasn't aware of what was available and I'm in a state of mind where I wouldn't even know where to look”*

Importance of Post-Diagnostic Supports: *“Not great support when we got the diagnosis, we didn't really know what to do. Dad's GP was no help either, he didn't really offer any support or advice”*



“And he said, I definitely didn't have Alzheimer's. I was far too aware of my condition. And he said anyone with Alzheimer's wouldn't be aware of the condition in such detail. So, without the results of the CSF he convinced me that I hadn't got it. And then I think it was a week or two later, I was told I definitely had it because of the CSF result... which made it even more traumatic.”

“They just brought me in and... they didn't actually tell me. They told my husband – he was sitting alongside me, they said “she has early onset Alzheimer's” and my husband was in shock and said “how long has she”? They were talking as if I wasn't there [laughing], and I was really upset over that. And so, then they just sent me home. And that was it. No more, nothing.”

Healthcare and Policy Professionals

- **Knowledge, Awareness, and Information**
- *“...most people probably don’t know what Cognitive Stimulation Therapy is”.*
- **Resources and Funding:**
- *“there’s a huge supply issue of qualified staff across the healthcare system...so while there is money there, it’s difficult to find qualified people to fill the roles”*
- **Culture and Attitudes:**
- *“There’s a lot of people would say, do the CST training, think it’s amazing, they’re like ‘I’m going to go and implement it’ but all of a sudden their workload grows too much, whereas they really need is their manager to say no, we need to prioritise this, let’s take some of that workload off so you could prioritise CST.”*



Recommendations:

*Liaising with ASI,
Memory Clinics and
NDO SIG on next
steps*

Awareness and Information

Staffing and Resources

Training

Coordination and Ownership

Research

ProBrain Research Team



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Thank you
Any
questions?

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