

# Social interaction can help fight depression in people with dementia

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Social and group activities can help fight depression in people with dementia, new research has found.

Researchers from the University of Sheffield and Brighton and Sussex Medical School, have analyzed the use of cognitive stimulation as an [effective treatment](#) for people with dementia.

Cognitive stimulation is a nonpharmacological treatment for dementia which typically includes group activities emphasizing [social interaction](#).

The assessment carried out by the researchers found that these treatments can reduce symptoms of depression in people with dementia as well as having a [positive effect](#) on memory and dementia ratings.

Dr. Claudia von Bastian, senior author of the research from the University of Sheffield, said: "Dementia is one of the biggest global challenges that we face. There is no cure for dementia and current pharmacological treatments often have [adverse side effects](#).

"Our research highlights that cognitive stimulation can be a safe, relatively cheap and accessible treatment to help reduce some of the core symptoms of dementia and may even alleviate symptoms of depression.

"We still need to learn more about the key ingredients of cognitive stimulation which lead to these benefits, how they influence the progression of dementia, but the absence of negative side-effects and the low costs of this treatment means the benefits are clear."

Dr. Ben Hicks, from the Brighton and Sussex Medical School, said: "It's great that governments now recognize the importance for people to live well with dementia. We've seen far more energy and resources put into developing initiatives to support this, such as cognitive stimulation, which is now used widely across the world.

"Our research is the first to comprehensively interrogate the [evidence base](#) for its effectiveness, using the most up to date statistical techniques.

While early signs are positive, there's an urgent need to improve the rigor of evaluative research and better assess the long-term benefits of cognitive stimulation. People with [dementia](#) need effective treatments. As a research community, this is what we must deliver."

**More information:** Robin M. T. Cafferata et al, Effectiveness of cognitive stimulation for dementia: A systematic review and meta-analysis., *Psychological Bulletin* (2021). [DOI: 10.1037/bul0000325](https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000325)

Provided by University of Sheffield

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