Effectiveness of the Cognitive Orientation to Daily Occupational Performance (CO-OP) in improving the occupational performance of children and adolescents with cerebral palsy

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Introduction: The top-down approach Cognitive Orientation to Daily Occupational Performance (CO-OP) seem to be a viable treatment option for children with cerebral palsy (CP), but its effectiveness in real clinical settings needs further support.

Objectives: Investigate whether children and adolescents with CP submitted to CO-OP in a Brazilian typical rehabilitation setting presented better outcomes than when submitted to Conventional Occupational Therapy (C-OT) and whether they retained and transferred the acquired skills.

Method: Crossover randomized clinical trial conducted with 12 participants aged six to 15 years old, randomized into CO-OP1 and CO-OP2 groups. The participants used the Perceived Efficacy and Goals Setting System to identify three intervention goals, a fourth untrained goal was used to evaluate skills transfer. The Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) scoring system and the Performance Quality Rating Scale Generic (PQRS-G) were used to measure changes. Treatments effects over time were analyzed by clinical parameters and Generalized Estimating Equations.

Results: There were statistical and clinical significant gains in performance and satisfaction as scored by the CO-OP1 (p=0.000 and p=0.000) and CO-OP2 (p=0.001 and p=0.001) participants as well as by the parents of CO-OP1 (p=0.000 and p=0.000) following CO-OP. PQRS-G gains were significant for both groups (p=0.000 and p=0.044) following CO-OP, but not after C-OT. Skills were retained as performance scores remained stable three months after CO-OP. Two participants from each group showed skills transfer.

Conclusion: The CO-OP approach was effective in a clinical setting, promoting relevant gains on the occupational performance of children and adolescents with CP.