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**Comparing Group-Based Interventions in Older Adults with Subjective Memory  
Difficulties**

A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

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**Veena Sothieson**

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## ABSTRACT

The trend internationally and within New Zealand is of an increasing aging population, with numbers of those with dementia projected to increase rapidly. One way to address this issue is to consider the practical and clinical benefits of running memory intervention groups for older adults with memory difficulties/impairment. The current study intended to address some of the limitations found in memory intervention literature by (a) using a social control group as a control comparison, which has not been done before, and (b) separating out components of memory training interventions (i.e., memory strategies and lifestyle education). Therefore, the aim was to determine the extent to which receiving Memory intervention separately from a Lifestyle Education intervention would affect memory functioning in older adults with subjective memory difficulties, when compared with a social control condition. Participants for the intervention group were recruited from rest homes and retirement villages, while social control participants were community-dwelling older adults already taking part in weekly community group activities. A brief cognitive screen and subjective outcome measures were administered at baseline, post Phase 1, post Phase 2, and at six month follow-up. Quantitative and qualitative information from a total of 13 participants were analysed. Results from each of the outcome measures across the four time points indicated that there were no significant benefits of receiving Memory and/or Lifestyle Education interventions, when compared with a social control condition. However, a small sample size, non-equivalent groups, and lack of random assignment were some of the limitations which made it difficult to reach definite conclusions. Content analysis of qualitative information following intervention sessions provided some valuable considerations for running memory groups in future. In light of its limitations, the current study highlights practical considerations and recommendations for future research in this area. In particular, it identifies the value of conducting memory intervention research with older adults in residential care settings.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
LIST OF APPENDICES .....	xi
CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW .....	1
Initial Proposal .....	1
Organisation of the Thesis .....	5
Terminology .....	5
CHAPTER 2: MEMORY AND AGING .....	7
A Basic Overview of Memory .....	7
Working memory. ....	8
Encoding, storage, and retrieval. ....	9
Long-term memory system. ....	10
Prospective memory. ....	11
Aging and Cognition .....	12
Normal aging process. ....	12
Cognitive domains affected by aging. ....	12
Chapter Summary: Memory and Aging.....	14
CHAPTER 3: MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT .....	16
Continuum of Memory Loss: Normal Aging to Dementia .....	16
Cognitive Domains Affected with MCI.....	17
Criteria for diagnosing MCI.....	19
Is a Diagnosis of MCI Valuable? .....	20
Key Differences Between Normal Aging, MCI, and Dementia .....	22

Subjective Memory Complaints and Functional Impairment .....	22
Other Factors Influencing MCI .....	24
Lifestyle factors. ....	24
Sensory impairment. ....	25
Comorbid neuropsychiatric symptoms. ....	27
Metamemory .....	27
Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of MCI.....	28
Cognitive Assessment .....	29
Chapter Summary: MCI.....	31
CHAPTER 4: INTERVENTION.....	33
An Overview of Cognitive Interventions .....	33
Cognitive Interventions with Cognitively Normal Older Adults.....	35
Cognitive Interventions with MCI.....	38
The benefits of intervention. ....	38
Teaching memory strategies.....	39
Summary. ....	40
Generalisability of training.....	40
Heterogeneity in Intervention Literature.....	41
Other Intervention Literature with Older Adults .....	42
Chapter Summary: Intervention .....	43
CHAPTER 5: CURRENT STUDY .....	44
Rationale for the Current Study .....	44
Initial Study Design .....	45
Modifications to the Study Design .....	46
Hypotheses. ....	47
Chapter Summary: Current Study.....	50
CHAPTER 6: METHOD.....	51

Ethical Considerations .....	51
Research Design.....	52
Participants.....	55
Recruitment.....	55
Study sample.....	57
Procedure .....	59
Assessment procedure.....	59
Facilitators.....	59
Outcome measures.....	60
The ACE-R.....	60
The MMQ.....	61
The MFQ.....	61
QoL-AD, GDS-15, and GAI.....	61
Intervention procedure.....	62
Materials .....	64
Data Analysis .....	67
Mixed methods design.....	67
Analysis I: Quantitative statistics.....	68
Data exploration.....	69
Rationale for mixed design ANOVA.....	69
Analysis II: Content analysis.....	70
CHAPTER 7: RESULTS .....	72
Analysis I.....	72
General cognitive screen.....	75
Memory and everyday activities.....	75
Knowledge and use of memory strategies.....	76

Memory-related affect and perceived change. ....	77
Psychological wellbeing. ....	79
Analysis II .....	82
Intervention sessions.....	82
CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION .....	92
Summary of Current Findings .....	92
Quantitative. ....	92
Qualitative. ....	93
Researcher Observations .....	97
Contributions to Existing Literature .....	99
Limitations of the Current Study .....	100
Recommendations for Future Research .....	107
Working with older adults in residential care settings. ....	109
Conclusions .....	111
REFERENCES .....	113



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. <i>Eleven Clinician Responses from Different District Health Boards (DHBs) Regarding Memory Clinics/Services Available Within New Zealand</i> .....	3
Table 2. <i>Criteria for the Clinical and Cognitive Syndrome of MCI</i> .....	20
Table 3. <i>Hypotheses for Each Group at Different Outcome Intervals Based on Outcome Measures</i> .....	48
Table 4. <i>Demographic Characteristics for Participants in Intervention and Social Control Groups</i> .....	58
Table 5. <i>Overview of Memory Programme</i> .....	64
Table 6. <i>Overview of Lifestyle Education Programme</i> .....	66
Table 7. <i>Summary of Major Purposes or Rationales for Conducting Mixed Methods Research</i> .....	68
Table 8. <i>Results from the Mixed Design ANOVA</i> .....	73
Table 9. <i>Means and Standard Deviations for Intervention and Control Groups Across the Four Time Points for All Measures</i> .....	74
Table 10. <i>Primary Coding Scheme: “In What Way Were Memory Sessions Helpful?”</i> .....	85
Table 11. <i>Primary Coding Scheme: “Which Memory Sessions Were Most Helpful?”</i> .....	86
Table 12. <i>Primary Coding Scheme: “Which Memory Strategies Were Most Helpful and Why?”</i> .....	87
Table 13. <i>Primary Coding Scheme: “What Did You Not Find Helpful in the Memory Sessions and Why?”</i> .....	88
Table 14. <i>Primary Coding Scheme: “Any Other Comments/Suggestions About Memory Sessions?”</i> .....	89
Table 15. <i>Primary Coding Scheme: “In What Way Were Lifestyle Education Sessions Helpful?”</i> .....	90

## LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 1.</i> Different Subtypes of Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), Amnesic or Nonamnesic, and Single or Multiple Domains. Adapted from “Mild Cognitive Impairment,” by E. Tangalos and R. C. Petersen, 2012, Principles and Practice of Geriatric Medicine, Fifth Edition, Minnesota: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. ....	19
<i>Figure 2.</i> Flow of participants and outcome measures used at different phases of the current study .....	54
<i>Figure 3.</i> Addenbrooke’s Cognitive Examination – Revised (ACE-R) scores across four different time points for Intervention and Control groups (baseline, post Phase 1, post Phase 2, and at six month follow-up).....	75
<i>Figure 4.</i> Multifactorial Memory Questionnaire (MMQ) Ability subscale scores across four different time points for Intervention and Control groups (baseline, post Phase 1, post Phase 2, and at six month follow-up).....	76
<i>Figure 5.</i> Multifactorial Memory Questionnaire (MMQ) Strategy subscale scores across four different time points for Intervention and Control groups (baseline, post Phase 1, post Phase 2, and at six month follow-up).....	77
<i>Figure 6.</i> Multifactorial Memory Questionnaire (MMQ) Contentment subscale scores across four different time points for Intervention and Control groups (baseline, post Phase 1 intervention, post Phase 2, and at six month follow-up) .....	78
<i>Figure 7.</i> Memory Functioning Questionnaire (MFQ) Retrospective Functioning subscale scores across four different time points for Intervention and Control groups (baseline, post Phase 1, post Phase 2, and at six month follow-up).....	79
<i>Figure 8.</i> Quality of Life – Alzheimer’s Disease (QoL-AD) scale scores across four different time points for Intervention and Control groups (baseline, post Phase 1, post Phase 2, and at six month follow-up) .....	80

*Figure 9.* Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) – 15 item version scores across four different time points for Intervention and Control groups (baseline, post Phase 1, post Phase 2, and at six month follow-up)..... 80

*Figure 10.* Geriatric Anxiety Inventory (GAI) scores across four different time points for Intervention and Control groups (baseline, post Phase 1, post Phase 2, and at six month follow-up)..... 81

*Figure 11.* Responses from feedback questionnaires indicating whether Memory and Lifestyle Education sessions were “Enjoyable” and “Helpful”. ..... 84

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A <i>Copy of Letter and Questionnaire Sent to Six Clinicians of the NZPOPs Email Group</i> .....	127
Appendix B <i>Responses to Questionnaires Sent to Clinicians Regarding Memory Clinics/Services</i> .....	130
Appendix C <i>Initial Study Design</i> .....	134
Appendix D <i>Invitation Brochure for Information Sessions About the Study</i> .....	136
Appendix E <i>Information Sheet and Consent Form for the Study</i> .....	137
Appendix F <i>Templates for Information Gathering in Initial Interview</i> .....	140
Appendix G <i>Outcome Measures Used in the Study</i> .....	142
Appendix H <i>Feedback Questionnaires Following Intervention</i> .....	157
Appendix I <i>Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) Memory Programme</i> .....	161
Appendix J <i>Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) Lifestyle Education Programme</i> .....	189