

A Pilot Project on Rehabilitation in Huntington Disease: Three Years Experience in Italy.

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Huntington Disease (HD) is a genetic, chronic, neurodegenerative disorder for which there is no known cure. In the past, rehabilitation in HD was justified on humanistic compassionate ground but now it has a more scientific fundament and theoretical support in recent studies using animal models that show beneficial effects of environmental stimulation on disease progression and suggest a possible positive impact of environmental factors on individuals affected by HD.

A pilot research project on the evaluation of rehabilitation effects in HD has been started in Italy in 1999. Fifty patients with a clinically and genetically confirmed diagnosis of HD have been enrolled in a rehabilitation protocol including neuromotor and cognitive therapy. Patients' conditions were assessed at patients' admission and discharge. Further additional data were collected from patient's and families' interviews. First results are encouraging because we can remark notable improvements both on motor control and psychological conditions and we have also found positive effects on family relationships and on caregivers well being state.

Analyses of data are currently performed.

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