



Practical cognitive rehabilitation strategies to tackle cognitive concerns in people with HIV

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**People with HIV
continue to experience
cognitive difficulties
despite successful
viral suppression**

Previous research¹ has identified specific cognitive concerns related to memory, attention and executive functioning in people with HIV.

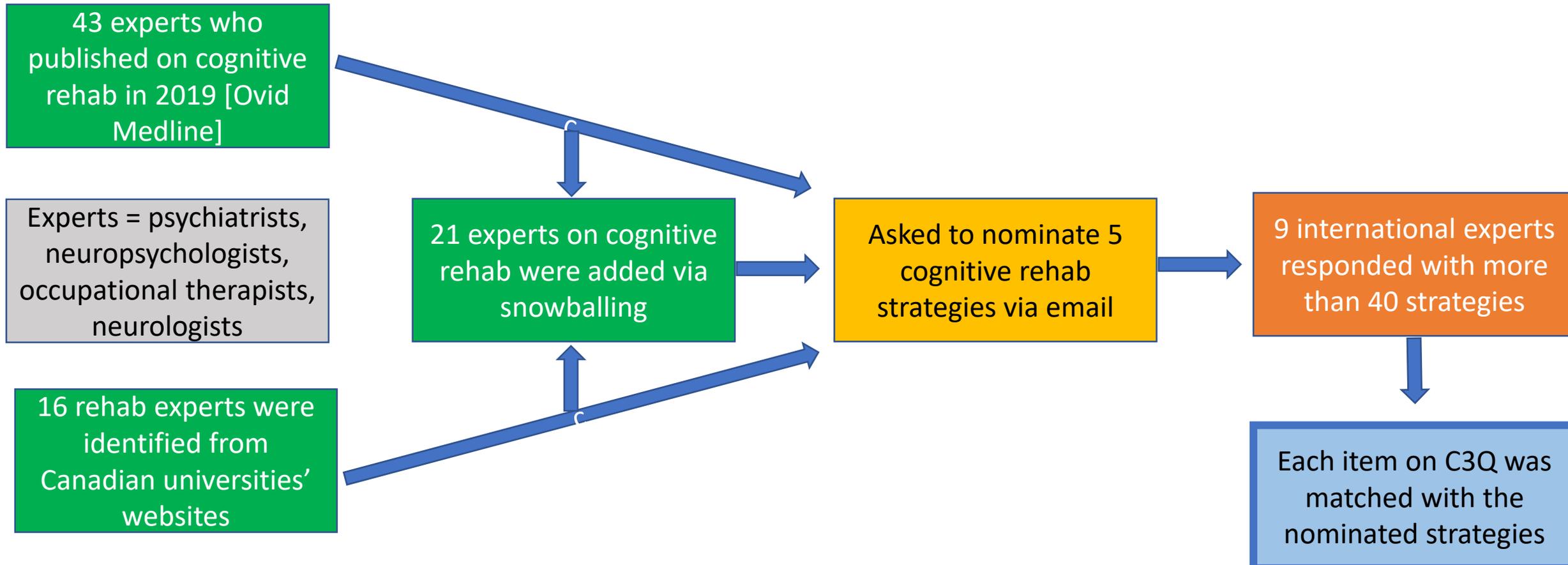
Self-management of these mild cognitive difficulties with some practical strategies that can be used with minimal/some assistance are required.

Objective

The purpose of this study was to link the most voiced cognitive difficulties among people with HIV with cognitive rehabilitation strategies.

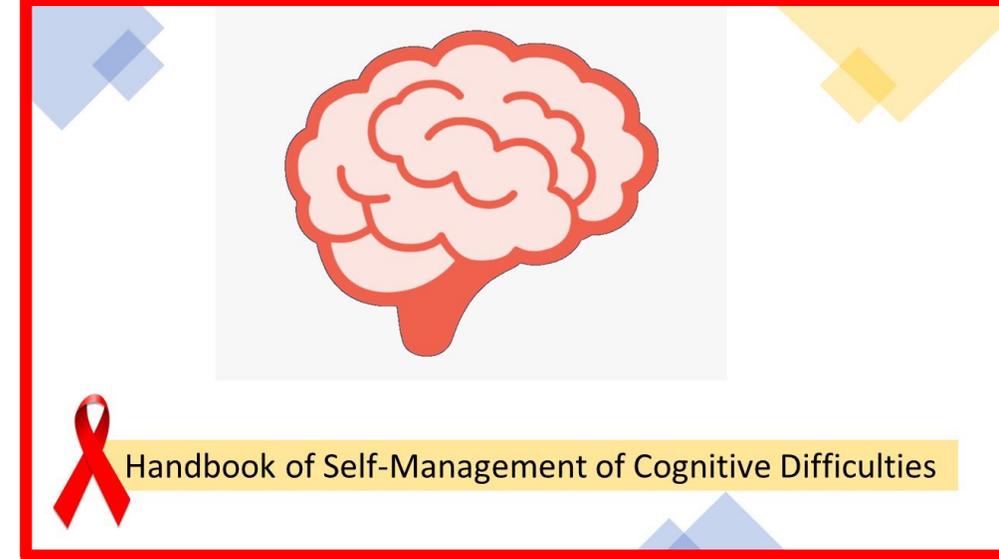
Methods

A short form of Communicating Cognitive Concerns Questionnaire [C3Q; developed and validated by the BHN investigators] with 10 items was used to identify the cognitive difficulties which are commonly reported by people with HIV.



A handbook of cognitive rehab strategies was created.

Table 1 situates each strategy recommended in the handbook based on the cognitive difficulties reported by people with HIV.



Item in C3Q	Strategies matched in the handbook
Lose focus when I have to pay attention to two things at a time	Pages 8-9
Forget what I was about to do	Pages 29, 35
Lose focus and I end up with too many thoughts in my head	Page 8
Forget tasks or activities I need to do	Pages 12-21, 26-27, 31
Forget what I have just read	Pages 38, 42
Forget when doing complex tasks	Pages 35-37
Lose focus on a conversation	Page 8
I can't be organized	Pages 12-27, 31-36
Forget if I had already done something	Page 16
Forget I have food cooking	Pages 20-21



A handbook of cognitive rehabilitation strategies was developed based on expert input. The literature on cognitive rehabilitation emphasizes use of external aids and compensatory strategies to circumvent the mild cognitive deficits common in many clinical populations. The usability of the Handbook of Self-Management of Cognitive Difficulties in HIV needs to be evaluated. To optimize its usability, it will be made freely available on the BHN website. With increased vulnerability to cognitive impairment in people aging with HIV, this work would fill a gap with respect to knowledge tools destined for the population in need.

References:

1. Askari, S., Fellows, L., Brouillette, M., Moriello, C., Duracinsky, M., & Mayo, N. (2018). Development of an item pool reflecting cognitive concerns expressed by people with hiv. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 72(2), 7202205070-1. doi:10.5014/ajot.2018.023945