Retrieval practice: A simple strategy for improving memory after traumatic brain injury


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Abstract: Memory impairment is common following traumatic brain injury (TBI), but interventions to improve memory in persons with TBI have been ineffective. Retrieval practice is a robust memory strategy among healthy undergraduates, whereby practice retrieving information shortly after it is presented leads to better delayed recall than simple restudy. In a verbal paired associate paradigm, we investigated the effect of retrieval practice relative to massed and spaced restudy on delayed recall in 14 persons with chronic memory impairment following a TBI and 14 age-matched healthy controls. A significant learning condition (massed restudy, spaced restudy, retrieval practice) by group (TBI, healthy) interaction emerged, whereby only healthy controls benefited from spaced restudy (i.e., distributed learning) over massed restudy, but both groups greatly benefited from retrieval practice over massed and spaced restudy. That is, retrieval practice greatly improves memory in persons with TBI, even when other mnemonic strategies (e.g., distributed learning) are less effective. (JINS, 2010, 16, 1147-1150.) Copyright © The International Neuropsychological Society 2010.

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