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Effects of emotion perception training on mood in undergraduate students

Submission date	Recruitment status	[ ] Prospectively registered
02/03/2011	No longer recruiting	[ ] Protocol
Registration date	**Overall study status**	[ ] Statistical analysis plan
23/03/2011	Completed	[X] Results
Last Edited	**Condition category**	[ ] Individual participant data
12/12/2014	Mental and Behavioural Disorders	

Plain English summary of protocol
Not provided at time of registration

Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
1434

Study information

Scientific Title
Effects of emotion perception training on mood in undergraduate students: a double-blind, placebo-controlled study

Study objectives
Previous research suggests that people with major depression have a distorted negative view of their surroundings. When compared to healthy controls, for example, they interpret ambiguous or neutral faces as being sad (Beck, 1967; Bouhuys et al., 1999; Leppanen et al., 2004; Naranjo et al., 2011). It has been proposed that this deficit in social perception may play an important causal role in maintaining depression, creating a vicious cycle in which the world is perceived largely negatively, increasing negative affect.

Our pilot work has indicated that it is possible to retrain how individuals perceive emotional expression. When viewing computer generated morph sequences that run from one emotion to another (where intermediate expressions are ambiguous), individuals see a change from one emotion to another somewhere in the middle. Training changes the point at which an ambiguous expression changes from perceived as happy to being perceived as sad. So, a face that was perceived by a participant as sad before training is perceived as happy after training.

We therefore hypothesise that the experimental modification of emotion perception, designed to induce a shift towards perceiving happiness instead of sadness, will reduce depressive symptomatology.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
University of Bristol Faculty of Science Research Ethics Committee approved on 28/10/10 (ref: 211010468)

Study design
Double-blind, placebo-controlled study

Primary study design
Interventional

Study type(s)
Treatment

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Depression / depressed mood

Interventions
Emotion recognition training versus control.

This is a computer-based intervention which presents faces on a sad to happy morph sequence. Participants have to judge the emotion of the face presented.

Feedback (informing participants whether they have made a correct or incorrect judgement) is used to train the participants after baseline measures of emotion perception have been taken.

Participants will be randomly assigned to one of two groups
1. Treatment (in which we attempt to change the perception of emotion)
2. Control (in which feedback reflects their baseline performance i.e. makes no attempt to change their perception of emotion)

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Beck Depression Inventory ii (BDI-ii) score- Beck, A.T., Steer, R.A., & Brown, G.K. (1996), Manual for Beck Depression Inventory II (BDI-II). San Antonio, TX, Psychology Corporation.

Outcomes are measured immediately after the training week, at one-week follow-up and at two-week follow-up.

Key secondary outcome(s))
Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) score:

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54, 1063-1070.

Outcomes are measured immediately after the training week, at one-week follow-up and at two-week follow-up.

Completion date
31/12/2011

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Participants will be undergraduate students from the University of Bristol who are identified as showing higher than average levels of negative mood by scoring 14 or more on the Beck Depression Inventory ii (BDI-ii) via an online baseline screening questionnaire.
2. We anticipate that we will also identify students who have a history of depression. We will not be excluding these participants, but their data will be collected for secondary analysis.
3. Participants will be required to have normal or corrected-to-normal vision.

Participant type(s)
Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
1. A score lower than 14 on the BDI-ii,
2. Current use of any illicit drugs (except cannabis)
3. Under 18 years of age or over 40 years of age

Date of first enrolment
01/01/2011

Date of final enrolment
31/12/2011

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
University of Bristol
Bristol
United Kingdom
BS8 1TU

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Bristol (UK)

ROR
https://ror.org/0524sp257

Funder(s)

Funder type
University/education

Funder Name
University of Bristol (UK)

Alternative Name(s)
Universitas Bristolliensis, bristoluniversity, bristoluni

Funding Body Type
Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype

Universities (academic only)

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary
Not provided at time of registration

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article	results	01/07/2012		Yes	No