

Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)-based therapy

Submission date 20/05/2016	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date 22/08/2016	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 01/09/2025	Condition category Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Mental disorders are impairing for the individual and are associated with low quality of life and reduced well-being. Treatment resistance (inadequate response to treatment) occurs in 25% -50% of patients. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), a further development of traditional behavioral therapy, may offer a starting point for treatment-resistant patients precisely because the therapy does not attempt to eliminate symptoms. Instead, the therapy helps the patient to stop the unsuccessful struggle by fostering the willingness to openly experience emotions and thoughts as such. ACT has shown promising results even with highly impacted patients suffering from diverse psychological disorders. What remains unknown is whether and to what extent ACT transfers to treatment-resistant, chronic (long-term) patients treated in routine in- and out-patients treatment settings. Furthermore, the mechanisms underlying treatment success or failure remain largely unknown. This study will therefore examine the effectiveness of ACT treatment for patients with treatment-resistant disorders.

Who can participate?

Inpatients and outpatients aged 18 – 65 presenting for specialized treatment in a psychiatric university clinic

What does the study involve?

Both the inpatient unit and outpatient units of the Universitären Psychiatrischen Kliniken in Basel both apply Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. The treatment program in the inpatient unit involves intensive psychotherapy, individually and in groups. Treatment in the outpatient unit consists of individual intensive psychotherapy. The goal is to limit treatment to 3 months on average, however the length differs by individual, and is determined by clinical necessity. In addition, the patients are followed-up once they leave the clinic after 1, 4, 9 and 12 months.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Participants can obtain a summary of their responses that will be shared with their treatment provider. The results will inform us about the processes involved in successful and unsuccessful treatment. Participation in the assessment procedures of this study is not known to be associated with any risks.

Where is the study run from?
Universitäre Psychiatrische Kliniken Basel (Switzerland)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
May 2016 to February 2021

Who is funding the study?
Schweizerischer Nationalfonds zur Förderung der Wissenschaftlichen Forschung (Switzerland)

Who is the main contact?
Prof. Andrew Gloster

Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

Contact name
Prof Andrew Gloster

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
EKNZ: 165/13

Study information

Scientific Title
Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)-based therapy

Study objectives
Effectiveness:
1. The Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)-specific intervention will lead to significant positive changes in two treatment settings (i.e., inpatient and outpatient).

Moderator variables:
2. Psychological flexibility will moderate the negative impact of stressors such that it will be buffered in patients who show high levels in psychological flexibility.

Long-Term Course and Outcome:
3. Positive changes observed between pretest and post-test will remain stable for 12 months following treatment in the ACT-condition.

4. The percentage of patients who successfully apply treatment processes following treatment will differ between the in- and out-patient settings. However, irrespective of setting, those patients who apply the processes will have less relapse.

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

Ethikkommission Nordwest- und Zentralschweiz, May 2016; Ref: EKNZ: 165/13

Study design

Effectiveness study with two non-randomized treatment arms (i.e., inpatient and outpatient) consisting of self-referring patients

Primary study design

Interventional

Study type(s)

Treatment

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Transdiagnostic, treatment-resistant patients, presenting for specialized in- and out-patient treatment

Interventions

Both the inpatient unit and outpatient units of the Universitären Psychiatrischen Kliniken in Basel will both apply Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. The treatment program in the inpatient unit involves intensive psychotherapy, individually and in groups. Treatment in the outpatient unit consists of individual intensive psychotherapy. Patients self-present for treatment and there is no randomisation. The goal is to limit treatment to 3 months on average, however the length differs by individual, and will be determined by clinical necessity, and cannot be guaranteed a priori.

The study includes a pre-, post- and follow-up measurement. The follow up (FU) assessments will take place after 1, 4, 9 and 12 months.

Intervention Type

Other

Primary outcome(s)

1. Symptoms: Brief Symptom Checklist (BSCL)
2. General Functioning: World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0 (WHODAS 2.0; 12-item version)
3. Well-Being: Mental Health Continuum (MHC-SF)

Primary outcomes are measured at baseline, post, and 12 months follow up.

Key secondary outcome(s)

Measures of:

1. Psychological flexibility/emotional avoidance
2. Depression

3. Worry
4. Anxiety/fear
5. Obsessions and compulsions
6. Social Interaction
7. Social fear
8. Process of psychological flexibility
9. Committed action
10. Cognitive fusion
11. Mindfulness
12. Values
13. Meaning of life
14. (Problematic) emotion regulation
15. Overall social support
16. Relationship satisfaction
17. Social network quality
18. Values
19. Perceived stress
20. Daily stress
21. Prosocial behaviors
22. Cooperation
23. Expectancy

Secondary outcomes are measured at baseline, post and 12 months follow up. Process measures of psychological flexibility, social interactions, social network quality, and daily stress are additionally measured at 1, 4 and 9 month follow-up.

Completion date

01/02/2021

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. Individuals 18 – 65 years of age
2. Inpatients and outpatients presenting for specialized treatment in a psychiatric university clinic
3. A history of at least one course of previous therapy
4. Signed letter of consent

Added 20/06/2019:

Some patients without previous therapy experience were included to enable full modelling of patients from those without treatment experience to those with treatment experience.

Participant type(s)

Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Adult

Lower age limit

18 years

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

200

Key exclusion criteria

1. Less than 18, greater than 65 years of age
2. Inability to understand the local language (German) in written form
3. Inability to complete the study design

Date of first enrolment

01/05/2016

Date of final enrolment

08/11/2019

Locations**Countries of recruitment**

Switzerland

Study participating centre

Universitäre Psychiatrische Kliniken Basel

Switzerland

4012

Sponsor information**Organisation**

University of Basel (Switzerland)

ROR

<https://ror.org/02s6k3f65>

Funder(s)**Funder type**

Research organisation

Funder Name

Schweizerischer Nationalfonds zur Förderung der Wissenschaftlichen Forschung

Alternative Name(s)

Schweizerischer Nationalfonds, Swiss National Science Foundation, Fonds National Suisse de la Recherche Scientifique, Fondo Nazionale Svizzero per la Ricerca Scientifica, Fonds National Suisse, Fondo Nazionale Svizzero, Schweizerische Nationalfonds, The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), SNF, SNSF, FNS

Funding Body Type

Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype

Trusts, charities, foundations (both public and private)

Location

Switzerland

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

Not provided at time of registration

IPD sharing plan summary

Data sharing statement to be made available at a later date

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article		06/04/2023	11/04/2023	Yes	No
Results article		31/05/2023	01/06/2023	Yes	No
Results article		24/03/2021	01/09/2025	Yes	No
Protocol article	protocol	10/06/2019	12/06/2019	Yes	No
Participant information sheet	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes