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Simulated patients in training and supervision

Submission date 06/12/2019	**Recruitment status** No longer recruiting	[_] Prospectively registered [X] Protocol [_] Statistical analysis plan [X] Results [_] Individual participant data
Registration date 10/12/2019	**Overall study status** Completed	
Last Edited 09/01/2025	**Condition category** Other	

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Psychotherapy is highly effective and widely acknowledged for treating various mental disorders. In terms of methods for teaching effective psychotherapeutic approaches and competencies, there has been a lack of investigation. Training and supervision are the main strategies for teaching therapist competencies. Standardized role plays with simulated patients (trained persons playing someone with a mental disorder) are useful for evaluating training approaches. In medical education, this procedure is now internationally established. However, little use has been made so far of standardized role playing to evaluate training and supervision in the area of clinical psychology and psychotherapy. Yet, this approach has a considerable potential for systemizing research. During the first phase of the research project, standardized role playing will be adapted to assess therapist competencies in clinical-psychological practice. In the second phase, standardized role plays are used to evaluate methods for training and supervision. In two experiments, central approaches for treating depression are trained (cognitive restructuring and behavioral activation). The first experiment compares an active training approach (model learning) with a passive one (reading the manual). The second experiment compares two methods of supervision (verbal report vs video analysis).

Who can participate?
Psychology students

What does the study involve?
In each experiment, students are randomly allocated to the experimental and control groups, and to the order of the training topics (behavioral activation and cognitive strategies or vice versa). Training: In the experimental group, participants watch a video of an experienced psychotherapist who skillfully demonstrates behavioral activation (Video 1) and cognitive strategies (Video 2) with an SP demonstrating a depressive disorder. In the control group, participants watch two unspecific learning tutorials.
Supervision: In the experimental group, participants show their video on behavioral activation (Video 1) and on cognitive techniques (Video 2) of an interaction with an SP demonstrating a depressive disorder to a supervisor (behaviorally-based). In the control group, participants report their experiences with the role plays to a supervisor (verbally-based supervision).
Each student takes part in three role plays (before, after and three-month follow-up) which are all videotaped. Two independent raters assess the therapist competence of each role play on the basis of an established competence scale.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
Participants will contribute to the further development of training and supervision methods. Participation may be associated with anxiety during the video recordings.

Where is the study run from?
University of Potsdam (Germany)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
June 2019 to March 2023

Who is funding the study?
German Research Foundation

Who is the main contact?
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Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

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Additional identifiers

EudraCT/CTIS number
Nil known

IRAS number

ClinicalTrials.gov number
Nil known

Secondary identifying numbers
WE 4654/10-1; KU 3790/2-1

Study information

Scientific Title
Simulated patients in training and supervision for the evaluation of therapeutic competencies

Study objectives
Post-training, psychology students randomized to the intervention group (i.e., modeling) will display more therapeutic competencies than students in the control group (i.e., reading written instructions; hypothesis 1).
These differences will persist until 3-month follow-up (hypothesis 2).

Post-supervision, psychology students randomized to the intervention group (i.e., supervision based on video sessions) will display more therapeutic competencies than students in the control group (i.e., supervision based on verbal reporting; hypothesis 3).
These differences will persist until 3-month follow-up (hypothesis 4).

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 23/05/2018 by the University of Potsdam ethics review committee (Universität Potsdam, Ethikkommission des Senats, Gremienverwaltung, Nadine Mohaupt, Am Neuen Palais 10, 14469 Potsdam, Germany; Tel: +49 (0)331 977 1791; Email: nadine.mohaupt@uni-potsdam.de), ref: 9/2018

Study design
Single-center randomized-controlled trial

Primary study design
Interventional

Secondary study design
Randomised controlled trial

Study setting(s)
Other

Study type(s)
Other

Participant information sheet

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Therapeutic competence

Interventions
Participants (i.e., bachelor and master students included either as trainees or supervisees) will conduct therapy sessions with standardized patients. They will be randomized in a 1:1 manner by

computer-generated numbers and allocated to the experimental or control groups, and to the order of the training topics (behavioral activation and cognitive strategies or vice versa). The allocation will be implemented by a researcher independent of the role plays.

Training (modeling vs written instructions)
Supervision (based on video sessions vs based on verbal reporting)

Training: In the experimental group, participants will watch a video of an experienced psychotherapist who skillfully demonstrates behavioral activation (Video 1) and cognitive strategies (Video 2) with an SP demonstrating a depressive disorder. In the control group, participants will watch two unspecific learning tutorials.

Supervision: In the experimental group, participants will show their video on behavioral activation (Video 1) and on cognitive techniques (Video 2) of an interaction with an SP demonstrating a depressive disorder to a supervisor (behaviorally-based). In the control group, participants will report their experiences with the role plays to a supervisor (verbally-based supervision).

Total duration of the first appointment: 3.5 hours, and of the follow-up appointment: 1.5 hours.

Intervention Type
Other

Primary outcome measure
Measured at pre, post- and 3-month follow-up:
1. Psychotherapeutic competencies measured via the Cognitive Therapy Scale (CTS)
2. Therapeutic techniques measured using a self-developed checklist

Secondary outcome measures
Measured at pre, post- and 3-month follow-up unless otherwise specified:
1. Therapeutic alliance measured using the Helping Alliance questionnaire (HAQ)
2. Empathy measured via the Empathy Scale
3. Therapeutic adherence measured using the Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Adherence Scale (CBT-AS)
4. Therapeutic knowledge evaluated by multiple choice questions and case vignettes
5. Anxiety measured by the state-trait-anxiety (STAI)
6. Authenticity measured by the Authenticity of Patient Demonstrations (APD) scale
7. Counseling skills measured using the Helping Skills Measure
8. Negative therapist effects measured using self-developed questionnaire
9. Personality measured by the Big Five Inventory (BFI-K) at post-measurement
10. Allegiance effects measured using self-developed questionnaire at pre-measurement
11. The individual perception of the study measured using a self-developed questionnaire at post- measurement and 3-month follow-up
12. Demographic data measured using a self-developed questionnaire at pre-measurement and 3-month follow-up

Overall study start date
15/06/2019

Completion date
13/03/2023

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Psychology students
2. Informed consent (i.e., agreement to the video recordings)

Participant type(s)
Other

Age group
Adult

Sex
Both

Target number of participants
136

Total final enrolment
70

Key exclusion criteria
1. Currently in psychotherapeutic treatment
2. Insufficient German language skills

Date of first enrolment
04/12/2019

Date of final enrolment
01/03/2023

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Germany

Study participating centre
University of Potsdam
Germany
14476

Sponsor information

Organisation

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Sponsor type
University/education

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Funder(s)

Funder type
Research organisation

Funder Name
Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

Alternative Name(s)
German Research Association, German Research Foundation, DFG

Funding Body Type
Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype
National government

Location
Germany

Results and Publications

Publication and dissemination plan
Planned protocol publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Planned publication of the study results in a high-impact peer-reviewed journal.

Intention to publish date
31/12/2024

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are not expected to be made available. Since making the individual participant data publicly available was not covered by the ethics vote, they will be held on a password-protected computer at the researchers' department until deletion (after 10 years) is prescribed.

IPD sharing plan summary

Not expected to be made available

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Protocol article	protocol	18/03/2020	19/03/2020	Yes	No
Interim results article	proof-of-concept trial	15/12/2022	16/12/2022	Yes	No
Results article		28/11/2024	09/01/2025	Yes	No