ISRCTN63094649 https://doi.org/10.1186/ISRCTN63094649

A comparison of two online cognitive-behavioural interventions for symptoms of depression in a student population: the role of therapist responsiveness

Submission date
20/08/2009

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
09/11/2011

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
10/11/2011

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[ ] Prospectively registered
[ ] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[ ] Results
[ ] Individual participant data
[ ] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol
Not provided at time of registration

Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

Contact name
Dr Ladislav Timulak

Contact details
199-200 Pearse Street
University of Dublin
Trinity College
Dublin
Ireland
2
+353 (0)879 343 678
Ladislav.timulak@tcd.ie

Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
OTD

Study information

Scientific Title
A randomised parallel group controlled trial of online delivered cognitive behavioural therapy treatment with an adult student population

Acronym
OTD

Study objectives
Online delivered cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) treatments for depression are effective and the presence of a responsive therapeutic relationship to treatment adds value to the treatment delivered and consequently has the potential to influence a successful outcome.

Please note, as of 10/11/2011 the public title for this trial has been updated. The previous title was as follows:
Online Treatments for Depression: a randomised controlled trial on an adult student population

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
University of Dublin, Ireland, 27 November 2007

Study design
Randomised parallel group controlled trial

Primary study design
Interventional

Study type(s)
Treatment

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Mild to moderate depression

Interventions
The trial had two active treatment conditions, the first being cCBT (Computerised Cognitive Behaviour Therapy), self-administered by the user with no support. The second was eCBT (Email Cognitive Behaviour Therapy), delivered by a clinician. Both used the same CBT protocol. In addition the latter had the added element of the therapists free text writing as a response to the clients free text alongside the specific CBT aspects of treatment. No other condition was present such as waiting list. The duration of the treatment was 8 sessions over 8 weeks. Baseline measures were administered for screening purposes, they were the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II), Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI), Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation - Outcome Measure - 10 items (CORE-OM-10), history collected data on previous experience of counselling and medication for depression, whether they had a previous diagnosis of a mental health disorder, alcohol and other drug use. Thereafter the principal measures were administered at Week 8, end of treatment, again at week 16 Follow-up and at week 32 Follow-up.

The online interventions included two CBT-based online treatments for depression. One consisted of therapist-led online counselling, the second was a self-administered software program called Beating the Blues, with minimal therapist contact. Beating the Blues is a cCBT

(computerised cognitive behavioural therapy) program utilised to treat depression and anxiety. Each intervention includes 8 sessions of online treatment comprising cognitive-behavioural interventions, including psycho-education, written assignments, self monitoring, cognitive-restructuring, behavioural change, and relapse prevention strategies. In addition to the specific CBT aspects of the treatment, the online counselling condition included counsellors, through text, cultivating non-specific treatment factors that develop the therapeutic relationship including such generic skills as conveying of empathy, normalising, responding to the client's emotions, and validating successes. Treatment was delivered by trained and experienced professional therapist with additional training in online counselling.

Intervention Type
Other

Phase
Not Applicable

Primary outcome(s)
Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)
Measured at baseline, week 8 (end of treatment), week 16 follow-up and week 32 follow-up

Key secondary outcome(s))
1. Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation - Outcome Measure (CORE-OM-10) measured at baseline, week 8 (end of treatment), week 16 follow-up and week 32 follow-up
2. Working Alliance Inventory (WAI)-was administered at weeks 2, 4 and 6
3. Helpful Aspects of Therapy (HAT)-was administered from session 2 to session 8
4. Satisfaction with treatment measure was administered at week 8, end of treatment

Completion date
01/06/2010

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
Participant scores between 14 and 29 on the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)

Participant type(s)
Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
1. Below 14 or above 29 on BDI
2. Suicidal ideation and/or plans

3. Diagnosed organic mental health disorder
4. Recent medical illness diagnosis
5. Drug or alcohol dependence
6. On medication for depression less than 6 months

Date of first enrolment
01/08/2008

Date of final enrolment
01/06/2010

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Ireland

Study participating centre
199-200 Pearse Street
Dublin
Ireland
2

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Dublin (Ireland)

ROR
https://ror.org/05m7pjf47

Funder(s)

Funder type
Research organisation

Funder Name
ESB Electric Aid (Ireland)

Funder Name
HSE Innovation Fund (Ireland)

Funder Name
National Office for Suicide Prevention (Ireland)

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?
Participant information sheet	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes