

# The effect of e-mail based depression information interventions on help seeking behaviour, mental health literacy and helping behaviour in young adults: randomised controlled trial

**Submission date**

16/01/2007

**Recruitment status**

No longer recruiting

☐ Prospectively registered

☐ Protocol

**Registration date**

05/03/2007

**Overall study status**

Completed

☐ Statistical analysis plan

☒ Results

**Last Edited**

26/10/2009

**Condition category**

Mental and Behavioural Disorders

☐ Individual participant data

**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**

N/A

# Study information

## Scientific Title

### Study objectives

Hypotheses about the effect of the interventions on mental health literacy:

1. Participants who receive depression information interventions will form less stigmatising attitudes towards depression and more positive beliefs about the helpfulness of evidence based treatments and health professionals who provide these treatments
2. Participants who receive depression information interventions will report a greater knowledge of the types of treatment that GPs and mental health professionals provide for depression and what to expect at an initial consultation
3. The effect seen in hypothesis 2 will be strongest in participants who receive the enhanced depression information intervention. This intervention includes practical advice about how to make contact with these health professionals and what to expect at the initial consultation.
4. Participants who receive depression information interventions will be more likely to report knowledge of an Australian website that has good information about depression and its treatment

Hypotheses about the effect of the interventions on help seeking behaviour:

5. The depression information interventions will modify help seeking behaviour in participants with elevated levels of depression. Specifically, at post-intervention follow-up, these participants will be more likely to report that they recently sought help for feelings of depression from their GP or a mental health professional and less likely to have sought help from informal sources
6. The study also tests the hypothesis that young adults go through particular stages of behavioural change before seeking professional help for depression; and investigates whether movement through these stages is related to informational content of the depression interventions

Hypotheses about the effect of the interventions on helping behaviour:

7. The study will also investigate whether the depression information interventions have an effect on participants helping behaviour towards friends who are experiencing depression

### Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

### Ethics approval(s)

Ethics approval received from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Australian National University on the 2nd November 2006 (ref: 2006/247).

### Study design

Randomised controlled trial

### Primary study design

Interventional

### Study type(s)

Quality of life

## **Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Depression

## **Interventions**

Two versions of the depression information interventions (basic and enhanced) will be compared to a control intervention. Participants who receive the depression information interventions receive a series of three weekly e-mails containing information about depression; its treatment; health professionals who provide these treatments; and resources for further information. The enhanced intervention contains more detailed information and also addresses ambivalence towards seeking professional help.

Participants in the control intervention receive a series of three weekly e-mails containing information about Meningococcal disease, amphetamines, and Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB).

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## **Intervention Type**

Other

## **Phase**

Not Specified

## **Primary outcome(s)**

Help seeking behaviour for feelings of depression.

## **Key secondary outcome(s)**

Mental health literacy outcomes:

1. Recognition of depression
2. Beliefs about the helpfulness of supportive counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy, interpersonal psychotherapy and anti-depressants for young adults with depression
3. Beliefs about the helpfulness of various people (including professionals and non-professionals) for young adults with depression
4. Depression stigma directed toward the self (self stigma)
5. Self-reported knowledge of processes involved in seeking help for depression from different health professionals
6. Self-reported knowledge about the types of help/treatments for depression provided by different health professionals and what to expect at an initial consultation
7. Self-reported knowledge of "an Australian website that has good information about depression and its treatment"

Helping behaviour outcomes:

Referral of depressed peers to a GP or mental health professional.

Other help seeking intentions and behaviour outcomes:

Stage of change for the behaviour of seeking professional help for feelings of depression.

Mental health status outcomes:  
Self reported symptoms of depression.

**Completion date**

30/06/2007

## **Eligibility**

**Key inclusion criteria**

1. Aged 19 - 23 years
2. Report that they use e-mail in a screening questionnaire and provide researchers with their first name and e-mail address
3. Be willing to participate in the trial

**Participant type(s)**

Patient

**Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

**Age group**

Adult

**Sex**

All

**Key exclusion criteria**

For ethical reasons, participants will be excluded from participating in the trial if they obtain the maximum score on a psychological distress scale included in the screening questionnaire (indicating that they are likely to be severely depressed)

**Date of first enrolment**

05/02/2007

**Date of final enrolment**

30/06/2007

## **Locations**

**Countries of recruitment**

Australia

**Study participating centre**

Centre for Mental Health Research

Canberra ACT

Australia

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# Sponsor information

## Organisation

Centre for Mental Health Research, Australian National University (Australia)

## ROR

<https://ror.org/019wvm592>

# Funder(s)

## Funder type

University/education

## Funder Name

Centre for Mental Health Research, Australian National University (Australia)

# 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?
<a href="#">Results article</a>	results	22/10/2009		Yes	No