

Effects of intervention duration and chat-based intervention in an online cannabis treatment program

Submission date 17/06/2014	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date 27/06/2014	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 02/01/2020	Condition category Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Cannabis is a popular recreational drug used all over the world, only behind alcohol, caffeine and tobacco. It can be addictive and cause mental health problems and lung damage. The therapist-guided web-based programme Quit the Shit (QTS) offers free and anonymous support for people who want to stop using cannabis, or reduce their intake. Previous research has shown that the programme is effective at reducing peoples cannabis use and so we now want to study the program effects more closely. We are especially interested in the effects of two main features of the program its duration and the therapist-guided chat.

Who can participate?

The study aims at German speaking cannabis users who want to cease or reduce their consumption and who are at least 18 years old, are not alcohol dependent, do not have a mental health problem, have not used other illicit drugs on more than 4 occasions in the last 30 days, are not suicidal and, finally, have not participated in the programme before.

What does the study involve?

After registering with the study, all participants fill out the baseline questionnaire of the study. It is presented online on the website of the program (<https://www.quit-the-shit.net>). The eligibility criteria are checked in the baseline questionnaire. To begin the programme, all participants pick an appointment to start. When logging into their user account at the scheduled appointment, they are randomized to one of four study groups: a) 28 days program duration without therapist-guided chat, b) 50 days program duration without therapist-guided chat, c) 28 days program duration with at least one therapist-guided chat, d) 50 days program duration with at least one therapist-guided chat. All participants have access to an online cannabis use-diary and up to six different online exercises aiming to improve their coping skills. Every week, each participant receives a detailed feedback from a trained psychologist on their journal entries.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

All participants gain access to professional, free of charge and anonymous support to help them reduce their cannabis use. The support is provided by trained and experienced psychotherapists.

Thus we assume that participants of all four study groups will benefit by reducing their cannabis use and by increasing their drug-related coping strategies. We do not see any noteworthy risks in participating.

Where is the study run from?

The study is fully internet based. It runs on the website www.quit-the-shit.net, owned by the German Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA).

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

August 2014 to February 2016

Who is funding the study?

German Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA), Germany

Who is the main contact?

Mr Benjamin Jonas,
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Contact information

Type(s)

Scientific

Contact name

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number

N/A

Study information

Scientific Title

Effects of intervention duration and chat-based intervention in an online cannabis treatment program ("Quit the Shit") - an online randomised controlled trial

Acronym

QTS

Study objectives

Both the duration of the program (50 days vs. 28 days) and the provision of at least one therapist-guided chat-session (yes vs. no) increase the effectiveness of a web-based intervention for cannabis users.

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

Ethics committee of the Magdeburg Stendal University of Applied Sciences, 29/07/2013, ref. AZ 4973-35

Study design

Randomised controlled trial

Primary study design

Interventional

Study type(s)

Treatment

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Cannabis use disorder

Interventions

Study participants are randomized to one of four groups

1. 28 days duration without therapist-guided chat
2. 50 days duration without therapist-guided chat
3. 28 days duration with at least one therapist-guided chat
4. 50 days duration with at least one therapist-guided chat

All participants have access to an online cannabis use-diary and up to six different online exercises aiming to improve their coping skills. Every week, each participant receives a detailed feedback from a trained psychologist on their journal entries.

Intervention Type

Other

Phase

Not Applicable

Primary outcome(s)

1. Cannabis use days during the last 30 days
2. Cannabis use amount (grams) during the last 30 days

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. Severity of Dependence Scale SDS
2. Cannabis Craving Scale CCS-7

Completion date

15/11/2016

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. Minimum age 18 years
2. Currently no alcohol use disorder (score of less than 3 in the CAGE instrument), psychotic disorder or bipolar disorder
3. Currently no use of other illicit drugs on more than 4 days during the last 30 days
4. No previous participation at the program
5. No suicidal thoughts

Participant type(s)

Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Adult

Lower age limit

18 years

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

534

Key exclusion criteria

Does not meet inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment

18/08/2014

Date of final enrolment

27/02/2016

Locations

Countries of recruitment

Germany

Study participating centre

Delphi GmbH

Berlin

Germany

14057

Sponsor information

Organisation

Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) (Germany)

ROR

<https://ror.org/054c9y537>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Government

Funder Name

Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) (Germany)

Alternative Name(s)

Federal Centre for Health Education, BZgA

Funding Body Type

Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype

National government

Location

Germany

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	08/05/2018		Yes	No
Other publications	analysis	26/07/2019	02/01/2020	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