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BITE: Is a study delivering cognitive behavioural therapy to treat eating disorders in the workplace possible?

Submission date
06/12/2021

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
25/01/2022

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
20/04/2023

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[_] Prospectively registered
[X] Protocol
[_] Statistical analysis plan
[X] Results
[_] Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Around 700,000 people in the UK struggle with an eating disorder, with extremely long waiting lists for treatment within healthcare settings. Common symptoms can include binge eating, restrictive eating, or compensatory behaviours to get “rid” of food (e.g. vomiting or laxatives). Symptoms such as these can significantly impact peoples’ lives, causing problems with mood, energy levels, social relationships and work. Mental health problems are the leading cause of sickness absence in workers and affect one in six workers each year. The aim of this study is to see if a brief therapy for eating disorders (cognitive-behavioural therapy [CBT-T]) is helpful for employees in the workplace (i.e a non-health setting). The researchers also hope to see how employees mood and productivity might be improved following its completion.

Who can participate?
Adults employed in the Midlands with a body mass index (BMI) of 18.5 kg/m² or over who might be avoiding food due to worries about losing control of eating or weight, who might be very worried or distressed about their body shape, weight and size, without a diagnosis of anorexia nervosa, who are not in their third trimester of pregnancy

What does the study involve?
CBT-T is a brief, ten-session therapy for symptoms of eating disorders in non-underweight individuals, based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. It is split into several phases which include:
1. Getting into a regular, healthy eating routine and tackling anxiety
2. Changing beliefs about food
3. Learning to tackle the emotions that drive eating problems
4. Normalising body image and strengthening body acceptance
5. Making sure that you stay well
The trial will offer employees access to up to 10 1-hour weekly therapy sessions with a specially trained therapist, together with two follow-up sessions 1 and 3 months later. All therapy sessions will be delivered remotely by video call.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
CBT-T is much shorter (10 sessions) than the standard CBT for eating disorders (20+ sessions) and has been shown to be equally as effective in healthcare settings. It may also help to reduce any anxiety and other emotional concerns. Whilst the researchers cannot guarantee recovery, if participants engage fully with CBT-T then they have a stronger chance of a full recovery and being able to get on with their lives.
As with all therapy, participants may experience some discomfort when talking about their experiences. They may also experience a natural increase in anxiety when trying out new behaviour patterns. Participants will be fully supported by their therapist throughout the trial and can share any concerns with them.

Where is the study run from?
WMG, University of Warwick (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
June 2021 to August 2022

Who is funding the study?
Midlands Engine (UK)

Who is the main contact?
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2. Dr Carla Toro, Carla.Toro@warwick.ac.uk

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Scientific

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
BSREC 152/20-21

Study information

Scientific Title
A feasibility study of the delivery of Brief Individual Treatment for Eating Disorders (BITE) in the workplace

Acronym
BITE

Study objectives
It is hypothesised that recruitment to and acceptability of cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT-T) in the workplace will be comparable with the health setting. The preliminary effectiveness of the intervention within this setting will be tested using measures of eating pathology, anxiety and depression, and work engagement.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 28/09/2021, Biomedical and Scientific Research Ethics Committee (Kirby Corner Road, Coventry, CV4 8UW, UK; +44 24 765 73123; BSREC@warwick.ac.uk), ref: BSREC 152/20-21

Study design
Single-centre single-group pilot study

Primary study design
Interventional

Study type(s)
Treatment

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Eating disorders

Interventions
All participants who consent to this trial will be offered the CBT-T intervention facilitated by a therapist via video call. CBT-T consists of 10 weekly sessions lasting 45 to 60 minutes, plus two follow-up sessions at 1 and 3 months post-intervention. The weekly sessions are structured around five sequential phases:
Phase 1 - education, nutrition and exposure with response prevention
Phase 2 - behavioural experiments and cognitive restructuring relating to food
Phase 3 - exposure and cognitive restructuring relating to emotions
Phase 4 - approaches to body image
Phase 5 - relapse prevention

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
1. Recruitment success is measured by number of participants who have consented to the full trial within 3 months of recruitment opening
2. Attrition is measured via % retention of participants through all assessments over the 10 weekly sessions and 2 follow up sessions
3. Study retention is measured through the percentage of participant attendance of all therapy sessions

Key secondary outcome(s))
1. Eating disorder symptoms measured using:
1.1. ED-15 at sessions 1-10 and post-intervention at 1 and 3 months
1.2. Eating Disorder Diagnostic Scale (EDDS) at baseline
1.3. Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire at sessions 1, 4, 10 and post-intervention at 1 and 3 months
2. Mood disorder symptoms measured using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 and Generalised Anxiety Disorder-7 at sessions 1, 4, 10 and post-intervention at 1 and 3 months
3. Work productivity measured through the Work Productivity and Activity Impairment: General Health v2.0 at baseline, session 10 and post-intervention at 1 and 3 months

Completion date
12/08/2022

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Able to give informed consent
2. English speaking
3. ≥18 years of age

4. In employment
5. Food avoidance due to concern about losing control of eating and weight
6. Concern or distress about body weight, shape or size

Participant type(s)
Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Lower age limit
18 years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
47

Key exclusion criteria
1. Diagnosis of anorexia nervosa
2. Body mass index <18.5 kg/m²
3. In the third trimester of pregnancy
4. Current suicidal ideation

Date of first enrolment
05/10/2021

Date of final enrolment
04/01/2022

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
WMG, University of Warwick
International Digital Laboratory
Coventry
United Kingdom
CV4 7AL

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Warwick

ROR
https://ror.org/01a77tt86

Funder(s)

Funder type
Other

Funder Name
Midlands Engine

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
Participant-level (raw) data will be available upon request. Requests for data should go to the corresponding author for the published protocol, Dr Carla Toro (carla.toro@warwick.ac.uk). Raw scores from measures listed in the protocol, and objective data collected during clinical contacts will be available following the publication of the final report for a period of 10 years. The data will be shared with anyone by email upon reasonable request (e.g. for related research purposes). Participants have consented to the use of their anonymised data for future research. Shared data will be fully anonymised.

IPD sharing plan summary
Available on request

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article		19/04/2023	20/04/2023	Yes	No
Protocol article		15/03/2022	08/09/2022	Yes	No
Participant information sheet	version 2.0	01/10/2021	20/12/2021	No	Yes
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes