

Internet-based vs. face-to-face therapy

Key words

E-THERAPY

**COGNITIVE
BEHAVIOURAL
THERAPY**

ANXIETY

CRITIQUE

PERSPECTIVE

ENGAGEMENT



Research Method

The literature review will be a narrative general literature review. Previous and current literature on this topic will be reviewed, critiqued and analysed to identify the patterns and gaps within. This should ultimately help frame an adequate research question as well as being readable and engaging to those who are not familiar with the topic.

Research Question / Inquiry

Is internet-based E-therapy more effective in treating anxiety disorders than face-to-face therapy?

Background and context

“E-therapy is a term that has been coined to describe the process of interacting with a therapist online in ongoing conversations over time when the client and counsellor are in separate or remote locations and utilize electronic means to communicate with each other” (Manhal-Baugus, 2001, p551)

E-therapy is thought to have originated in October 1972 during an International Conference on Computer Communication between Stanford and UCLA (Ainsworth, 2001). One of the earliest examples of an online therapy service is ‘Dear Uncle Ezra’, an online advice column created by Cornell University in which many mental health issues were discussed (Lang, 2007).

Dr David Sommers and Ed Needham were pioneers in online therapy; the former was the first to provide continuing dialogue between therapist and patient, whilst the latter was the first to exclusively use chat rooms to communicate with patients (Rauch, 2017). In the modern landscape, E-therapy is now very accessible, sites such as Talkspace and Kooth offer free online counselling services for those in need.

Discussion points

- Origin of E-therapy
- Anxiety disorders and treatment
- Face-to-face therapy techniques
- E-therapy techniques
- Previous study findings

Authors under consideration

- Manhaul-Baugus, 2001: Author of *E-therapy: practical, ethical and legal issues*
- Gerhard Andersson, Pim Cuijpers, Per Carlbring, Heleen Riper, Erik Hedman, 2014: Authors of *Guided Internet-based vs. face-to-face cognitive behavior therapy for psychiatric and somatic disorders: a systematic review and meta-analysis*
- Birgit Wagner, Andrea B. Horn, Andreas Maercker, 2014: Authors of *Internet-based versus face-to-face cognitive-behavioral intervention for depression: A randomized controlled non-inferiority trial*
- Julia E W C van Gemert-Pijnen, 2016: Author of *Mixing Online and Face-to-Face Therapy: How to Benefit From Blended Care in Mental Health Care*
- Spijkerman, M., Pots, W., & Bohlmeijer, E, 2016: Authors of *Effectiveness of online mindfulness-based interventions in improving mental health: A review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials*

Ethical Considerations

Whilst writing the literature review, the data collected will be reported and discussed accurately, even if they oppose the original hypothesis. If the original authors are contacted for more information, any raw information will be treated with utmost sensitivity and no information regarding the participants will be shared publically. Any literature being reviewed will be from professional and moral sources who completed their studies ethically. The researcher will protect themselves from any data that may harm or distress them.

Potential Arguments / Implications

- The implications of this review would strengthen the previous research towards e-therapy and face-to-face therapy.
- It can be argued that face-to-face therapy allows the therapist to read body language that may contrast the words they are saying. However participants in face-to-face therapy can become anxious upon discussing their mental health in front of someone, the anonymity and locus of control provided with an online service may allow them to open up more.



I am fine.

Everything is OK

These sentences seem positive if read at face value, but if said out loud in person a professional can pick up on inflections and body language that suggests otherwise.



Any questions?

References

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