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Effect of motivational interviewing and rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) for substance use disorders

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Aim: The present study aimed to investigate whether a 10-session intervention consisting of Motivational Interviewing and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) was more efficacious than routine treatment in reducing substance use and improving symptomatology and general functioning.

Method: A community sample of people with a depression and function disorder and who reported hazardous alcohol, cannabis and/or amphetamine use during the preceding month was recruited. Participants were randomly allocated to motivational interviewing/REBT (n=55) or treatment as usual (n=55), and were assessed on multiple outcomes at baseline, 15 weeks, 6 months and 11 months.

Results: There was a short-term improvement in depression and a similar trend with regard to cannabis use among participants who received the motivational interviewing/REBT intervention, together with effects on general functioning at 11 months. There was no differential benefit of the intervention on substance use at 11 months, except for a potentially clinically important effect on amphetamine use. Results provide evidence that motivational interviewing and rational emotive behavior strategies are essentially respectful and collaborative, and it promotes client self-efficacy. It is compatible with the most widely available support groups for substance users. Given its strong skills focus, group REBT is an ideal method for persons who deficiency particular coping skills either in direct relation to substance use (e.g., drink/drug refusal skills, emotional coping) or to coping with life conditions that may trigger substance use. This approach is adaptable, able to be fitted to individual needs, and is based dependably on assessment of factors related with substance use.

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