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A new integrative and preventive intervention program for patients undergoing hematopoietic stem cell transplant: First results of a pilot study with students

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Statement of the problem: People undergoing bone marrow transplantation may have some psychological symptoms such as depression and anxiety and physical symptoms as pains all along the process, especially during hospitalization. An investigation about a new preventive intervention to help people to cope with this event has been led. This program is divided into three subtasks: the first one is a new attentional bias modification task, the second one is an optimizing emotional regulation task and the third one is a mindfulness intervention. Each task aims to facilitate the realization of the next one. The program would be implementable at home and during hospitalization with a digital platform. Before implementation in hospital, a pilot study was conducted in the laboratory with the first subprogram.

Methodology and Theoretical Orientation: 38 students were recruited ($Mage=22.6$, $SD=7.2$, $N_{experimental\ condition}=19$). This attentional bias modification task consisted in detecting a positive picture amongst three others (negatives and neutrals), moving it toward the screen's center and savoring the associated emotion. Before and after training they realized an eye tracker procedure in order to detect the presence of an attentional bias modification.

Findings: The increase of positivity bias (i.e. a longer fixation time on positive stimuli) was significantly greater in the experimental condition than in the control one. There is no significant decrease in negativity bias in the experimental condition as a control. The effects of the task on positivity bias tend to be greater for subjects with depressive symptoms.

Conclusion and significance: the First result of this pilot study provides interesting elements to pursue our investigations. Next step is to test the effectiveness of the second intervention (a positive psychology one) with the completion of the first task. Finally, we will test the whole program before proposing it to patients before and during their hospitalization.

Biography

Maya Corman (University Clermont Auvergne, LAPSCO CNRS UMR 6024) is a second-year PhD student in psychooncology under the supervision of Pr Michael Dambrun, Pr Regis Peffault Delatour and Jacques-Olivier Bay. Her thesis work focuses on a psychological approach of people with hemopathy and undergoing stem hematopoietic cell transplantation process. This topic has two issues: the first issue aims to identify deleterious (e.g anxiety) or protective (e.g optimism) psychological factors involved in the different steps of bone marrow transplantation process. The second aims to put in place preventive intervention focused on emotion and attention regulation in order to reduce psychological distress before hospitalization and provide to patients some emotional and attentional resources to cope with this event in an adaptive way. By proposing such an intervention via a digital platform this program aims to overcome hospitalization constraints like isolation and treatment side effects getting patients physically and psychologically vulnerable.

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