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Intensive telephone support in guided internet cognitive behavior therapy for depression in sub-optimally motivated patients

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The efficacy of human supported internet-delivered asynchronous self-help Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (iCBT) for depression is well established. Studies suggest that guidance is important and that programs without therapist support are less effective. Different ways of support have been studied. The objective of this study was to find out if an Intensive Telephone Support (ITS) can increase the proportion of patients completing the program (primary outcome), to prevent unnecessary delays during the treatment and to improve the effects of iCBT on symptoms of depression. Patients on iCBT who expressed sub-optimal motivation (n=100) have been randomly assigned to either Intensive Telephone Support (ITS) added to iCBT or to iCBT as usual (seven sessions of standard CBT on the internet, with written asynchronous therapist-patient communication). There were significantly more program completers in the ITS group than in control group. Predictors and mediators of these effects, as well as monetary rationale for ITS will be discussed.

Biography

Satu Pihlaja is currently a PhD student at the University of Helsinki, Finland. She studies internet interventions for mental health with a research group in the University Hospital of Helsinki and Uusimaa. She has published a review paper on therapeutic alliance in internet interventions.

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