

The second Randomised Evaluation of the Effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and Acceptability of Computerised Therapy (REEACT-2) trial: does the provision of telephone support enhance the effectiveness of computer-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy? A randomised controlled trial

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Declared competing interests of authors: David Richards reports grants from University of Exeter during the conduct of the study and is a member of the National Institute for Health Research Career Development Fellowship, Senior Research Fellowship and Transitional Research Fellowship Panel 2013 to the present.

Published November 2016

DOI: 10.3310/hta20890

Plain English summary

The REEACT-2 trial

Health Technology Assessment 2016; Vol. 20: No. 89

DOI: 10.3310/hta20890

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Plain English summary

Depression is a common mental health problem. An effective talking treatment for depression is cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT). Computerised CBT (cCBT) is a more recently developed form of CBT that is delivered with help from a computer rather than a face-to-face therapist. Previous research indicates that the effectiveness of cCBT can be increased when it is supported with guidance delivered by telephone. We conducted a fair test of a freely available cCBT program [MoodGYM (National Institute for Mental Health Research, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, Australia)] delivered in two different ways. In the first way, cCBT was delivered with minimal support, as offered in the UK NHS at the moment. In the second, the same cCBT program was delivered, but in conjunction with weekly telephone calls providing guidance delivered according to a manual (telephone-facilitated cCBT).

A total of 369 people with depression were allocated either (1) cCBT with minimal support or (2) telephone-facilitated cCBT. People recruited to the trial completed questionnaires about symptoms of depression, and general and mental well-being, at 4 and 12 months after the study started.

The telephone facilitation of the cCBT program resulted in additional reductions in depression severity in the short term, but we were no longer able to detect this effect at 12 months. The provision of telephone facilitation therefore increases the effectiveness of cCBT. We found that this enhancement of care was achieved at an acceptable cost and is likely to be good value for money for the NHS. When people with depression are offered cCBT, they should also be offered telephone support to increase the chances of deriving benefit.

ISSN 1366-5278 (Print)

ISSN 2046-4924 (Online)

Impact factor: 4.058

Health Technology Assessment is indexed in MEDLINE, CINAHL, EMBASE, The Cochrane Library and the ISI Science Citation Index.

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This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the HTA programme as project number 06/43/504. The contractual start date was in November 2013. The draft report began editorial review in July 2015 and was accepted for publication in February 2016. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The HTA editors and publisher have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the draft document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

This report presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The views and opinions expressed by authors in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HTA programme or the Department of Health. If there are verbatim quotations included in this publication the views and opinions expressed by the interviewees are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect those of the authors, those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HTA programme or the Department of Health.

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