

# One-session treatment compared with multisession CBT in children aged 7–16 years with specific phobias: the ASPECT non-inferiority RCT

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## Plain English summary

The ASPECT non-inferiority RCT

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## Plain English summary

A phobia is an intense, ongoing fear of an everyday object or situation. The phobia causes distress and the person with the phobia avoids that object or situation. Many children and young people have phobias that affect their daily lives. Cognitive-behavioural therapy helps by changing what people do or think when they have a phobia and is the most common treatment approach. However, cognitive-behavioural therapy is expensive, takes time and is not always easy to get. Different treatments are needed to help children and young people with specific phobias. One such therapy is one-session treatment, which works in similar ways to cognitive-behavioural therapy but takes place over one main 3-hour session. Our study, called ASPECT (Alleviating Specific Phobias Experienced by Children Trial), compared these two treatments to examine whether or not one-session treatment is as effective as cognitive-behavioural therapy. Overall, 274 children and young people aged 7–16 years from 26 sites nationally helped with our research, of whom 268 received either cognitive-behavioural therapy or one-session treatment. The results at 6 months found that one-session treatment and cognitive-behavioural therapy worked as well as each other for treating phobias in children and young people. We also found evidence that one-session treatment is cheaper than cognitive-behavioural therapy. We spoke with children and young people, their parents/guardians and the therapists of the single-session treatment, and we found one-session treatment to be acceptable for their needs.

Future research could explore how to make one-session treatment more easily available for children and young people with specific phobias because it can save time and money, and works just as well as cognitive-behavioural therapy.



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