PEARLS

Therapist-supported internet CBT effective for adult anxiety disorders

Clinical Question	How effective is therapist-supported internet cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for anxiety disorders in adults?
Bottom Line	Therapist-supported internet CBT was more efficacious in treating anxiety disorders among adults than a control of waiting list, attention, information, or online discussion group (low to moderate quality evidence). There was no significant difference in the effectiveness of internet CBT with therapist support and unguided internet CBT, though the quality of the evidence was very low. Patient satisfaction was generally reported to be higher with therapist-supported internet CBT. Internet CBT with therapist support might not differ in effectiveness compared to face-to-face CBT (low quality evidence). Adverse events were rarely reported in the studies.
Caveat	There was a large degree of heterogeneity in a number of the meta-analyses, reducing the quality of some of the evidence. The nature of the internet CBT interventions was quite diverse in terms of length, number of online modules, and nature of therapist contact. At six to 12 month follow-up, results generally mirrored the post-treatment findings but were limited by the small number of studies and the degree of variability in the interventions under investigation across studies.
Context	CBT is an evidence-based treatment for anxiety disorders. Many people have difficulty accessing treatment, due to costs, long waiting lists, lack of available time for appointments, transportation problems, and limited numbers of qualified therapists. Internet CBT provides a possible solution to overcome many of the barriers to accessing face-to-face therapy.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Olthuis JV et al. Therapist-supported Internet cognitive behavioural therapy for anxiety disorders in adults. Cochrane Reviews, 2016, Issue 3. Art. No.: CD011565.DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD011565.pub2. This review contains 38 studies involving 3,214 participants.

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