

Improving aftercare by modern technologies for severe anorexia nervosa after intensive inpatient treatment: A randomized controlled trial with a therapist-guided smartphone app

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Authors

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Aim

The aim of this study is to conduct a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the efficacy of a guided smartphone-based aftercare intervention following inpatient treatment of patients with anorexia nervosa (AN). We assume that, compared to treatment as usual (TAU), receiving a guided smartphone-based aftercare intervention as an add-on element to TAU results in a higher body-mass-index (BMI) at the end of the aftercare intervention.

Background

Inpatient treatment for patients with AN is moderately effective. Furthermore, a number of patients show symptom increase and relapse in the year after discharge. An innovative, guided, smartphone-based aftercare intervention provided by the hospital could help patients transfer newly acquired strategies and techniques to everyday life, and therefore support symptom stabilization or continued improvement after inpatient treatment.

Method

184 female patients with a DSM-5 diagnosis of AN (307.1) are randomized either to receive an 8-week smartphone-based aftercare intervention with therapist feedback as an add-on element to TAU or TAU alone. Therapist feedback will be provided in-app twice per week during the first four weeks and once per week for the last four weeks. BMI and eating disorder symptoms will be assessed at baseline (discharge of inpatient treatment), post-intervention (after eight weeks) and at 6-month follow-up after discharge. Secondary outcome measures include patient satisfaction, adherence to the smartphone-based aftercare intervention, and post-discharge health care utilization.

Execution

October 2017 - September 2019

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