

Online depression fix has big impact

July 2 2012



People who used the online depression programs had a marked increase in their quality of life. Credit: Jerry Bunkers on Flickr

(Medical Xpress) -- Online depression therapy programs can have a positive impact on more than just depressive symptoms, a new study from The Australian National University reveals.

Dr. Lou Farrer, from the ANU Centre for Mental Health Research, part of the ANU College of Medicine, Biology and Environment, trialled the effectiveness of online programs MoodGYM and BluePages with users of Lifeline's telephone crisis line. She found that the online programs had a positive influence across a range of problems – not just depression.

“In addition to reducing depression symptoms, we found that the online programs were effective in reducing hazardous alcohol use in Lifeline callers. There was a significant drop in alcohol use among those who

used MoodGYM and BluePages,” she said.

“The results also showed that people who used the online programs had a marked increase in their quality of life, as measured by a scale that assessed satisfaction with different areas of daily living.

“We also found that after treatment, people’s knowledge of depression increased. This is essential to enable people to be able to better understand and recognize the signs and symptoms of future depressive episodes.”

Dr. Farrer said that these results follow on from her original study published in 2011, which showed that the use of online programs for Lifeline callers was effective in reducing symptoms of depression.

“We worked with Lifeline centres in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. Lifeline telephone crisis supporters identified callers who seemed to be experiencing [symptoms](#) of depression or anxiety. These people were then split into different groups who were asked to complete different programs using the online intervention tools MoodGYM and Blue Pages.”

Dr. Farrer said that these results showed that depression treatments can have important flow on effects.

“We didn’t expect these results, as the programs are designed specifically to treat depression. It’s exciting to see that by alleviating [depression](#), these programs may also be helpful in improving how people function in their day-to-day lives,” she said.

“What we need now is funding to roll these programs out into Lifeline on a more permanent basis so that callers can benefit.”

More information: www.jmir.org/2012/3/e68/

Provided by Australian National University

Citation: Online depression fix has big impact (2012, July 2) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-07-online-depression-big-impact.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.