

# Online treatment dramatically cuts suicide risk

September 18 2012

---



(Medical Xpress)—Australian research, published in the *British Medical Journal Open*, shows a dramatic reduction in both depression and suicidal thoughts in patients who participated in a study involving internet cognitive behaviour therapy.

"Web-based services for people with depression have been cautious about treating people who have [suicidal thoughts](#) but this study shows intervention for these people is successful," says lead author of the study, Professor Gavin Andrews of the School of Psychiatry at the University of [New South Wales](#).

Almost 300 patients were prescribed an internet-based cognitive behaviour therapy course for depression by [clinicians](#) over the internet at [www.thiswayup.org.au](http://www.thiswayup.org.au) . The reduction in suicidal thoughts following the six-lesson program was evident regardless of sex and age.

"A clinical audit of how primary care practitioners use the depression course showed that half the people who met criteria for depression and were prescribed the course had thought that they would be 'better off dead' in the previous 14 days," UNSW Medicine's Professor Andrews says.

"When they completed the course 10 weeks later, half of the 300 people no longer met criteria for depression. Half of the people who had thought they would be 'better off dead' no longer thought that way."

This is the first study to demonstrate this association in primary care, the authors say.

"At present, it is routine to exclude patients with frequent suicidal thoughts from participating in internet [cognitive behaviour therapy](#). Given that suicidal thoughts are an integral part of depression, this research shows that there is a rational basis for inclusion of people with suicidal ideas," they say.

People interested in participating in research should go to [www.virtualclinic.org.au](http://www.virtualclinic.org.au) to register.

Provided by University of New South Wales

Citation: Online treatment dramatically cuts suicide risk (2012, September 18) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-09-online-treatment-suicide.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.