

Is web-based psychotherapy sufficient for treating mild depression?

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A study published in the current issue of *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* provides new data on the role of web-based psychotherapy in mild depression.

Research on the effectiveness of treatments for subthreshold [depression](#) (sD) is still scarce. The aim of this study was to evaluate the efficacy of a web-based guided self-help intervention (GET.ON Mood Enhancer) in the treatment of sD. Participants with sD (n = 406) recruited from the general population via a large health insurance company were randomly allocated to a web-based cognitive behavioral intervention or to enhanced care-as-usual.

The primary outcome was the reduction in depressive symptom severity as measured with the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale at post-treatment and at 6-month follow-up. Results show that participants in the [intervention group](#) reported a significantly greater pre-post reduction in depressive symptom severity ($d = 1.06$; 95% CI: 0.86-1.27) compared to the control condition ($d = 0.29$; 95% CI: 0.10-0.49). The corresponding between-group effect size was $d = 0.69$ (95% CI: 0.49-0.89). At 6-month follow-up the effect was reduced to $d = 0.28$ (95% CI: 0.09-0.48) but was still statistically significant ($F_{1, 403} = 9.240$, $p = 0.003$).

This study lends support to the idea that problem solving coupled with behavioural activation is an effective treatment for sD. In addition, the delivery of this [intervention](#) over the Internet might be a promising

strategy for the dissemination of psychological interventions for sD on a large scale.

More information: Claudia Buntrock et al. Effectiveness of a Web-Based Cognitive Behavioural Intervention for Subthreshold Depression: Pragmatic Randomised Controlled Trial, *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* (2015). DOI: [10.1159/000438673](https://doi.org/10.1159/000438673)

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