The results of a study presented today at the Annual European Congress of Rheumatology (EULAR) 2017 has shown that Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, a form of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) that focuses on psychological flexibility and behaviour change, provided a significant reduction in self-reported depression and anxiety among patients participating in a pain rehabilitation programme.

This treatment also resulted in significant increases in self-efficacy, activity engagement and pain acceptance.

To assess the potential benefits of an 8-week programme of group Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) in people with persistent pain, measures of pain acceptance and activity engagement were taken using the Chronic Pain Acceptance Questionnaire. Measures of psychological distress using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale and self-efficacy were also taken at assessment, on the final day of the programme, and at the follow up six-month review.

For those chronic pain patients with scores at all three time points, there were statistically significant improvements in all parameters between baseline and at six-months follow-up, including the change in mean score of depression, anxiety, self-efficacy, activity engagement and pain willingness (p