Digital intervention reduces depressive symptoms in people living with HIV

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University's College of Health and Human Services and her colleagues in China developed the digital intervention Run4Love on the popular social media app WeChat. They evaluated Run4Love with a randomized controlled trial (RCT) of 300 PLWH with depression in China, published in the Journal of Medical Internet Research.

Run4Love was a multimedia digital program adapted from evidence-based Cognitive Behavioral Stress Management courses. Participants received stress reduction exercises, cognitive therapy, and exercise guidance on WeChat. Their progress was monitored with timely, tailored feedback. The intervention led to a significant reduction in depressive symptoms (0.6 effect size) in 3-, 6- and 9-month follow-ups and reduced stress, suicidal behaviors, and improved quality of life.

"This is one of the first large RCTs with long-term follow-up to evaluate digital interventions in global health settings." Hong explains, "The success of Run4Love suggests an app-based digital intervention is feasible for many PLWH in resource-limited settings."

More information: Yan Guo et al, Effect of a WeChat-Based Intervention (Run4Love) on Depressive Symptoms Among People Living With HIV in China: A Randomized Controlled Trial, Journal of Medical Internet Research (2020). DOI: 10.2196/16715

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