

Enhancing group lifestyle intervention for depression with ecological momentary assessment: A pilot randomized controlled trial

Vincent Wing-Hei Wong

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Statement of the Problem: To investigate the impact of smartphone-delivered ecological momentary assessment (EMA) as a self-monitoring tool to complement a six week group multicomponent lifestyle medicine (LM) intervention for improving depressive symptoms in an adult Chinese population.

Methodology and Theoretical Orientation: Participants with at least a moderate level of depressive symptoms (n = 56) were randomized to the EMA-supported intervention (ELM; n = 18), pure intervention (PLM; n = 20), or care-as-usual (CAU; n = 18) groups. Data were collected at baseline, immediate post-intervention and three month follow-up.

Findings: PLM showed large improvements in depressive and insomnia symptoms, physical health-related quality of life (QoL), total lifestyle, nutrition, and stress management at Week seven compared to ELM/CAU, while ELM showed large improvement only in environmental health-related QoL relative to CAU. At Week 19, both intervention groups demonstrated medium to large improvements in various clinical (depressive, anxiety, and insomnia symptoms), psychosocial (physical health, psychological health, and environmental health), and lifestyle (total lifestyle, nutrition, spiritual growth, interpersonal relationship, and stress management) outcomes. However, only ELM showed medium to large improvements in overall QoL, general health, and physical activity compared to PLM/CAU. No significant differences in study attrition and intervention attendance were found between groups. Though ELM had a low EMA compliance rate of 27.1%, it exhibited a higher proportion of full intervention adherence (66.67%) compared to PLM (38.89%), albeit not significantly different.

Conclusions and Significance: A group-based, multicomponent LM intervention may be efficacious for managing depressive symptoms, and smartphone-delivered EMA has the potential to improve full intervention adherence. This study warrants a future adequately powered trial to assess the merits of EMA-supported LM interventions for depression.

Biography

Vincent Wing-Hei Wong is currently a PhD candidate in Psychology at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. He received his MPhil degree in Psychology at the same University in 2020. He is an expert in randomized controlled trials and meta-analytic reviews, and has particular interests in lifestyle medicine and low-intensity psychological interventions for common mental disorders. Moreover, he is an International Board Certified Lifestyle Medicine Professional. During his postgraduate research studies, he has authored several international peer-reviewed journal articles on lifestyle medicine for common mental disorders, and has secured more than \$HKD 1.7 million in research grants.

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Partnering with therapy dog in acute psychiatric inpatient unit-Supporting recovery and building resilience

Suman Tyagi*, **Melinda Adamcewicz** and **Pratibha Saraph**

Western Sydney Local Health District, Australia

The benefits of animal-assisted therapy in residential aged care facilities have been recognized for several years. In recent study, pet therapy has been found to improve older people's mood and cognitive function. Older consumers who have a poor response to pharmacological treatment may experience significant improvements in their mood by adopting and interacting with a pet. The pet therapy program (The program) aimed to improve consumers' perceived mood and overall well-being by providing in-person sessions to consumers in the acute mental health inpatient unit in partnership with Delta Dog Society. The program was a unique therapeutic activity as it eliminated language and cultural and linguistic barriers and included all consumers. This kind of program, first time offered in the acute inpatient mental health units, transformed the consumer experience. The positive impact the pet therapy sessions had on consumers' moods and well-being exhibits the therapeutic magnitude of this intervention.

Staff observed increased levels of arousal and interaction from consumers when interacting with the therapy dog; quiet and withdrawn consumers came out of their shells, talking to the dog and asking questions of the volunteer about the dog. Spending time with the therapy dog also invoked memories of the consumer's dog or the pet they had in the past. One elderly gentleman was reduced to tears of joy remembering special times with his deceased pet. Consumers demonstrated significant improvements in their mood, the feeling of hopefulness, reductions in anxiety levels and improvements in overall well-being and a spillover effect on carers and health staff. The program increased the effectiveness of our service delivery, resulted in enhancing consumers' resilience and supporting their recovery journey. It may also have some influence on early discharge and timely reintegration into the community