Reviewer's report

Title: Internet-based interventions for eating disorders in adults: a systematic review

Version: 2 Date: 8 January 2013

Reviewer: Ina Beintner

Reviewer's report:

As stated in my first review, I deem the research question relevant and the manuscript worth publishing. Yet in my opinion, several issues in the manuscript still need revision.

Abstract

• You note that six studies describe guided CBT-based self-help interventions, however, information on what the other two are about is missing.

Background

• This section is still somewhat wordy. Try to concentrate on what is relevant for your research question: What is known, what is unknown, what do you want to find out?

• Full syndrome eating disorders are not very prevalent (1-3%, see Hoek & van Hoeken) compared to other mental illnesses like depression or anxiety disorders. I would suggest deleting the first sentence.

• You state that many ED prevention programs have been developed, yet reference only to Student Bodies. Also, it is unclear why you chose to cite Jacobi et al. along with the Student Bodies Metaanalysis, and did not cite the other primary studies. This seems arbitrary.

• Obesity is not an eating disorder, so I would not mention it in line with BN, BED and EDNOS.

• You mention that results of an AN relapse prevention program have been published, but do not report these results. Also, it is unclear why this is relevant to your research question. Maybe you want to move this to the discussion section.

• Exclusion criteria for your review belong in the methods section.

Results section

• The results section is still lengthy. Summarize tables rather than report every detail.

• Format your tables according to the journal guidelines.

• In the tables give a range for CIs to make it easier to read (d=0.98, CI 95% 0.58-1.38)

• In tables 3 and 4, the column for Robinson & Serfaty does not contain any
information and should be deleted

• Figure 2 is redundant. All the information is in the tables.

• Pooling two standard deviations is not the same as calculating a mean of two standard deviations. I sincerely hope the mistake is only in using the wrong word, rather than using the wrong method. If not, see Rustenbach p.70 for instructions.

• You keep writing about “significant effect sizes”. This is very unusual. Effect sizes normally complement test of statistical significance (t-test, ANOVA) The reporting of effect sizes facilitates the interpretation of the substantive, as opposed to the statistical, significance of a research result. Stick to the conventions of small, medium and large effects – and no effects.

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Reconsider your interpretation of between-group effect sizes: if there is an effect, it means that the reduction of a certain behavior in intervention group is greater than in the control group.

Discussion

• While the discussion section now has a clearer structure, it is still wordy and would benefit from some more sentence level editing. Finish your manuscript with a clear take-home-message.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.