Reviewer’s report

Title: Choosing between Internet-based psychodynamic versus cognitive behavioral therapy for depression: a pilot preference study

Version: 2 Date: 10 March 2013

Reviewer: Blake F Dear

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this interesting study. The study uses the Control Group from a larger RCT, following a generic intervention, and compares the preferences and clinical outcomes of 44 participants given the choice of participating in IPDT or ICBT. It also examines the relationship between strength of participants’ preferences and clinical outcomes and adherence. This is an informative study and contributes to the existing literature, although some minor revisions would improve the manuscript and enhance its impact.

Minor Essential Revisions:

OVERALL
- The authors start to touch on this issue in the Discussion. But, the manuscript would benefit from further information or discussion, or both, concerning the differences between the two treatment protocols in terms of the level of patient work involved. It is unclear from the manuscript, if the level of work required to ‘adhere’ to and progression through the treatments is comparable. This is a difficult issue to address but it could explain the lack of statistically significant findings regarding treatment preference and may be an important factor to 'problematize' in the Discussion.
- The study would benefit from minor revision and rewriting to make its statements more clear and specific, especially with regard to its findings.

ABSTRACT
- Page 2: If no direct head-to-head comparisons exist, it may be better to say that IPDT appears to result in outcomes 'comparable' to ICBT.
- Page 2: The Results section of the abstract would benefit from minor rewriting to make it more specific and to include summary data. For example, it is unclear what is meant by saying the "ICBT treatment was more efficient in terms of quality of life".

BACKGROUND
- Page 3: The sentence, "Only 18-25% of patients of 12-month cases in the USA were adequately treated [1]", would benefit from rewriting.
- Page 4: remove "absolute" from "absolute majority".
- Page 4: The sentence, "Most studies have investigated the beneficial effect of
being matched with one’s preferred treatment related to outcome, i.e. a difference in outcome between clients who did receive a preferred treatment and those who did not receive a preferred treatment."

- Page 5: It would be helpful to define strength of preference somewhere around where the concept is introduced.

METHODS

- Page 6: It would be worthwhile to include a very brief description of the recruitment and selection procedures in this manuscript. This will enable this manuscript to be read as a manuscript in its own right.

- Page 7: Most readers of the manuscript would like to be able to read the descriptions of the two interventions. So, if it is possible within the space limitations, it would be beneficial to include them.

Page 9: It would be helpful to have further information about how access to the materials was governed for IPDT and ICBT, and if the progression through the materials was similar.

- Page 9: This may have been detailed in the previous study. But, was therapists' adherence to the treatment protocols assessed?

RESULTS

- Page 13: The sentence, "there was a correlation between strength of preference and adherence to treatment, albeit not significant (r = .28, p = .070)"

would benefit from rewriting. It is also erroneous to say there is a correlation when it is not statistically significant.

- General: There is variation between analyses in the number of decimal places reported, particularly for p values. It would be helpful to report these to 3 decimal places as is used in the initial analyses of the primary outcome measures.

DISCUSSION

- Page 14 and 15: The first paragraph would benefit from rewriting to more clearly and specifically describe the findings in relation to the study's aims.

- Page 15 and 16: I would suggest removing conclusions about the study not providing support for the importance of preference matching given the study did not examine preference matching. Rather, it would be better to use this space to describe and focus on the findings regarding preference strength.

- Page 16: The sentences, "Third, the prediction analyses made in this study should be considered preliminary, as no a priori hypothesis existed. However, this exploratory study has warranted the inclusion of a statement of strength of preference"

would benefit from rewriting.

TABLES

- Table 2. Please clarify if the reported means are estimated marginal means?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
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