Author’s response to reviews

Title: Computer-assisted cognitive-behavioral therapy for adolescent depression in primary care clinics in Santiago, Chile (YPSA-M): study protocol for a randomized controlled trial

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editor,

I am sending the manuscript entitled “Computer-assisted cognitive behavioral therapy for adolescent depression in primary care clinics in Santiago, Chile (YPSA-M): study protocol for a randomized controlled trial” again with the following corrections:

1. Request of the editor: Background: With the sentence ‘[CCBT] can be effective in the treatment of adults, although the outcomes in adolescents remain unclear’, the authors refer to reference 16, which is a reference for panic disorder amongst adults. Please use more appropriate references demonstrating results of efficacy for CCBT programs for depression among adolescents. Examples are: Calear et al (The YouthMood Project – J Cons Clin Psych 2009) or O’Kearney et al. (school-based interne program for reducing depressive symptoms in adolescent girls- Depr Anx 2009; Effects of a CBT internet program on depression, vulnerability to depression and stigma in adolescents males: a school-based RCT- Cogn Beh Ther 2006).


2. Request of the editor: In the last paragraph (alinea), the construct ‘blended’ is used, which has not been introduced before. Please define this construct and provide a rationale for using this type of delivery of CCBT. Also add references of research using this type of delivery method of technology-based interventions. Evidence of guided self-help is robust (e.g. Cuijpers et al., 2010, Is guided self-help as effective as face-to-face therapy, Psych Medicine). There is some
evidence of the efficacy of blended therapy but most research on efficacy of blended therapy is still being examined. That the CCBT is offered blended also needs to be addressed in the abstract/title.

Answer: We prefer to eliminate the term ‘blended’ because it is not well documented in the literature. We maintained the term ‘computer-assisted’ and added the definition of this in the manuscript: ‘Eells et al. define computer-assisted psychotherapy as a ‘psychosocial treatment in which a significant portion of the content is delivered with the use of computer technology or in which the computer technology assists the work of a therapist’. And explain that the intervention is a computer-assisted psychotherapy led by trained psychologist. We also expanded the background to better clarify the rational of this choice.

3. Request of the editor: Please adhere to the SPIRIT guidelines for protocols (see Trials website, instructions for authors of study protocols. Describe usual care comprises. E.g. interventions: description of control group, strategies to improve adherence, recruitment: strategies for achieving adequate participant enrolment to reach target sample size, how will recruitment take place? Which method of assessment delivery will be used (face-to –face, paper-pencil, online)? This will have influence on psychometric properties of questionnaires used. Also provide information about data management, data monitoring, possible harms and about assessors of the diagnostic interview: what is their clinical background and how are they trained to assess the diagnostic interview?

Answer: All of these aspects were incorporated in the new version of the manuscript.

4. Request of the editor: The discussion is one sentence long. This needs to be expanded. This can include discussion of any practical or operational issues involved in performing the study, and any other issues linked to the study that do not fall within background/methods.

Answer: The discussion was expanded.

5. Request of the editor: Is there a manual of the CCBT intervention available or published? Please add the reference, or state whether this manual is available on request with the authors.

Answer: It was added the sentence: ‘Copies of the computerized program are available upon written request to the PI (VM).’

6. Request of the editor: Authors contribution: please use abbreviations (VM, GR and RA conceived…)

Answer: The change was made.

Best regards, Vania Martínez.