Reviewer’s report

Title: The adaptation and evaluation of a CBT-based manual for the inpatient treatment of youth depression: a pilot study

Version: 0 Date: 21 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Michael Kölch

Reviewer's report:

The authors report about a feasibility study on a manualized CBT treatment for inpatients in child and adolescent psychiatry. Patients had a MDD. The study was conducted in Germany. In general, the MS is well written and include most relevant information. Authors report about the major limitations of their study and the discussion is well balanced. As it is of high interest to conduct research with inpatients in real world settings, this study adds some essential value to an area where research results are scarce. Therefore, congrats to the authors for this study. I recommend the MS for publication in general, but some minor points should be revised.

There are some points I would recommend to consider within a revision of the MS to improve the MS and to set the study into broader perspective.

Is there any data about time trends in treatment of MDD? If so, authors could add this in the discussion, maybe out of other studies, e.g. from studies with a waiting group or a PBO group? This would be interesting to estimate the effects which have been found in the study by the authors for TADS-in.

There is some literature about effective elements of CBT for MDD. To which extent the TADS-in manual was referring to the most effective elements, and to what extent the participants received the most effective elements (and which portion of all sessions consisted of less effective elements)? Is there an effect detectable of which sessions had effects? If not, this should be reported. As there have been weekly assessments, I would expect some detectable effects.

As authors report on inpatient treatment, I assume that the patients are more severe depressed than outpatients or have a lower level of functioning than outpatients. Is there any data available for the duration of MDD before inpatient treatment? Did the authors have any data about experience with therapy before inpatient treatment (due to high comorbidity maybe for another disorder in these cases with first episode of MDD)?

Data is lacking for fidelity of therapists with the manual in the result section. This should be explained a little bit more in detail. Was there a videotaping or something else to ensure the treatment fidelity of therapists? As therapists have had a heterogeneous expertise in psychotherapy this information would be helpful, resp. could be otherwise added as a limitation.

Minor points:
the increase of inpatient treatment depends on the national type of health care system. Maybe for international readers a short explanation of the German system would be helpful to understand the way how treatment is delivered in Germany.
P13: results on general aspects of inpatient treatment (line 10 -17) could be omitted, as they are not directly related to the TADS manual.

P20 line 12: omit "meaningful". It is not necessary and due to the limitations of a pilot study it is enough to detect an (positive) effect.

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

'I declare that I have no competing interests'

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.
I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal

Were you mentored through this peer review?

No