

CAHE JC Critically Appraised Article Summary

Journal Club Details

Date of submission	2008 November
Journal Club location	Noarlunga Health Services
JC Discipline/s	Multidisciplinary
JC Facilitator	Kelly Vlassopoulos

Clinical Scenario

Is there evidence for the effectiveness of cognitive behavioural therapy in reducing symptoms of depression among older patients?

Review Question/PICO/PACO

- P** Elderly patients
- I** Cognitive behavioural therapy
- C** No therapy or usual care
- O** Rates/severity of depression

Article/Paper

Thompson LW, Coon DW, Gallgher-Thompson D, et al. Comparison of Desipramine and Cognitive/Behavioural Therapy in the Treatment of Elderly Outpatients with Mild-to-moderate Depression

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Article Methodology: Randomised Clinical Trial

Returned JC on: 21 November 2008

By CAHE staff member: Lucylynn Lizarondo

Ques No.	Yes	Can't Tell	No	Comments
1	✓			<p>The study asked a clearly focused question.</p> <p><i>Participants:</i> age 60 years and older with a diagnosis of major depressive disorder; no medical or psychiatric contraindications; no evidence of serious alcohol abuse; no evidence of psychotic disorder or bipolar disorder; no immediate suicide risk; not taking another medication for the treatment of depression</p> <p><i>Interventions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desipramine alone • Cognitive/behavioural therapy alone (CBT) • Combined desipramine and cognitive/behavioural therapy <p><i>Outcomes:</i> Beck Depression Inventory (BDI); Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (Ham-D)</p>
2			✓	<p>Having a control (placebo) group would be preferable but nonetheless the approach used in this study was still appropriate to address the research question.</p> <p>Is it worth continuing? YES</p>
3	✓			<p>The participants were randomly allocated to the different groups. However, the process of randomisation was not reported.</p> <p>No significant differences were found in the demographic characteristics and baseline scores for the outcome measures. This homogenous distribution of participants demonstrated that randomisation was successful.</p>
4			✓	<p>The study did not report any form of blinding, which could have potentially introduced bias in the results. It would have been impossible though to blind the therapists who facilitated the cognitive behavioural therapy.</p>
5	✓			<p>The study not only carried out an intention-to-treat analysis but has also performed comparative analysis of those who discontinued with the therapy and those who completed the study.</p>
6	✓			<p>Outcomes were measured and collected in the same way for all participants.</p>
7			✓	<p>Power calculation was not carried out. Hence it would be difficult to determine whether or not the study used an adequate sample size.</p>

Ques No.	Yes	Can't Tell	No	Comments
8				<p>The results were presented using pre and post test means and SD for BDI and Ham-D for all intervention groups. Groups were statistically compared using p-values.</p> <p><i>Results:</i> The 3 treatment conditions have shown significant improvement in the depression of older patients. In general, CBT alone and Combined groups have shown similar levels of improvement. In most instances, the Combined group shoed greater improvement than Desipramine alone group, while the CBT alone group showed only slightly better improvement. The combined therapy was most effective in patients who were severely depressed.</p>
9				<p>Differences between groups were determined based on p-value computation. Results from this study can therefore be considered precise.</p>
10			✓	<p>There are other important outcomes which were not considered, such as cost effectiveness of treatment options and adverse reactions to medications. The authors have acknowledged some issues that may limit generalisability of results, such as those related to pharmacotherapy and social characteristics of patients.</p> <p>The results may still have some limited applicability to the local setting. However, the extent to which the findings could be applied is still a decision that is best made with those dealing with each individual setting.</p>