

Clinical effectiveness of an internet-delivered Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) intervention for chronic pain: Findings from a randomised control trial

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Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

- ACT uses acceptance and mindfulness strategies, with commitment and behaviour-change strategies, to increase *psychological flexibility*
 - *i.e., capacity to continue with or change behaviour, guided by goals, in a context of interacting cognitive and non-cognitive influences*
- ACT for chronic pain
 - “strong research support” for general chronic pain (American Psychological Association, 2011)
 - Wide array of delivery methodologies evaluated to date
 - Move towards internet-delivered ACT treatment programmes for pain



The Current Study

(for full study protocol see *Hayes et al., 2014 in BMJ Open*)



- Online ACT intervention for chronic pain
 - 8 sessions to be completed over 8 weeks
 - Delivered via interactive online platform *LifeGuide*
- Participants: 70 intervention, 107 control
 - No significant differences between groups at baseline
- Outcomes:
 - Pain severity & interference (BPI-SF)
 - Depression (BDI)
 - Pain-specific anxiety symptoms (PASS-20)
 - Global improvement with treatment (PGIC)
 - Activity engagement & pain willingness (CPAQ-8)
 - HRQoL (EQ-5D)
- Analyses: 2 (group) x 2 (time) between-subjects ANOVAs



Results



- Significant effect of *group* on:
 - **Pain interference** ($F_{[1,175]} = 4.89, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .03$)
 - **HRQoL** ($F_{[1,175]} = 5.63, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .03$)
 - **Impression of change** ($F_{[1,175]} = 4.30, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .02$)
 - **Depression** ($F_{[1,175]} = 3.98, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .02$)
 - **Activity engagement** ($F_{[1,175]} = 5.57, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .03$)
- Significant *time x group* interaction for:
 - **Pain severity** ($F_{[1,175]} = 4.74, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .03$)



Conclusions

- Findings offer preliminary support for the immediate effects of an 8-week online ACT intervention for chronic pain
- Next steps:
 - Examine 3-month follow-up data
 - Final questionnaires due in October
 - Analyse cost-effectiveness data
- Future directions:
 - Comparison of ACT online versus face-to-face?





Thank you for your attention!

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