

Abstract

Introduction

The global disease burden of depression and anxiety disorders (emotional disorders) and its treatment gap suggested problems in the current dissemination and access of mental health services. The predominating disorder-specific approach, cognitive-behavioral therapy in particular, was found to be inefficient in both training and access of psychotherapy. Transdiagnostic treatment for emotional disorders had been developed and received empirical support in reducing symptomatology. However, there were limited studies on the effect of sex, age and education level on transdiagnostic treatment outcomes.

Method

Transdiagnostic cognitive-behavioral therapy based on the protocol developed by Ling and Leung (2012) was offered to the treatment group. The primary outcome measures included depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, stress symptoms, positive affect, negative affect and functional impairment. Rate of Improvement for each outcome measure between the groups of sex, age and education level were compared using independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA.

Result

There were a total of 91 eligible participants in the current study, with 44 and 47 of them in the treatment and TAU group respectively. The treatment and TAU group displayed distinct effect of sex, age and education level on treatment outcome.

Discussion

The effect of sex, age and gender on treatment varied according to the change of therapeutic components. The heterogeneous mental health service of TAU had rendered meaningful analyses of the treatment outcome of TAU group difficult. The group format of TCBT and the three way interaction of sex, treatment modality and pre-treatment severity of psychopathology might explain the effect of sex on treatment outcome in the treatment group.