

Title:

The Efficacy of Self-Help Multicomponent Lifestyle Medicine Intervention versus Self-Help Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Depressive Symptoms: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial

Abstract

Objective: To examine the efficacy of self-help lifestyle medicine (LM) versus self-help cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for improving depressive symptoms in Chinese adults

Method: 75 participants with depressive symptoms (the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 score ≥ 10) were randomly assigned to either the LM group (n =25), the CBT group (n =25), or the waitlist control group (WL) (n =25) in a 1:1:1 ratio. Participants in the LM group and the CBT were provided with 6 LM booklets and 6 CBT booklets respectively.

Results: Both the LM group and the CBT group showed significant improvement in depressive symptoms (d=0.81 and d=0.53) and insomnia severity (d=0.56 and d=0.56). Nevertheless, no significant differences in depressive symptoms and insomnia severity were observed among the three groups. Only the LM group showed a significant increase in health-promoting behaviours (d=0.62) at week 7 when compared to the WL group.

Conclusions: Self-help multicomponent LM manifested comparable efficacy to self-help CBT in improving depressive symptoms and appeared to be beneficial to promote lifestyle behaviour changes. Nevertheless, since no significant differences in depressive symptoms were found when compared to the WL group, the evidence provided in this pilot RCT is preliminary. Further high-quality research studies with a larger sample size are needed to provide more concrete evidence for the inclusion of LM into current depression management.

Keywords: self-help, depression, lifestyle, cognitive behavioural therapy, randomized controlled trial