

Abstract

Background: Sleep disturbances are highly comorbid with anxiety symptoms and have been conceptualised as a transdiagnostic process. The Transdiagnostic Sleep and Circadian Intervention (TranS-C) was developed to treat common sleep and circadian problems that often co-occur in mental illnesses. Given the trend of Hong Kong citizens' deteriorating mental health and shortage of personnel, this study examined whether the TranS-C intervention can alleviate sleep disturbances and anxiety symptoms in Hong Kong.

Methods: A two-armed parallel pilot randomised control trial with 80 eligible participants was conducted. Participants were randomly assigned to either the TranS-C intervention group or the care-as-usual group (CAU group) in a ratio of 1:1. The TranS-C intervention group received 6 consecutive weeks of in-person group intervention that was adapted and localised from Harvey and Buysse (2017)'s protocol. Primary outcome measures included anxiety symptoms. Secondary outcome measures included depressive symptoms, insomnia severity, and health-related quality of life. Assessments were administered at baseline and post-intervention follow-up (Week 6).

Results: Compared to the CAU group, the intention-to-treat analysis revealed that the TranS-C group exhibited a significant reduction in anxiety and insomnia symptoms, a decrease in co-existing depressive symptoms, and an improvement in health-related quality of life from baseline to immediate post-treatment with medium to large effect sizes.

Conclusion: Our findings suggested that the TranS-C may be an effective and acceptable treatment option for Hong Kong adults with sleep disturbances and anxiety symptoms.

Trial registration: ClinicalTrials.gov, NCT05453981. Registered on 12 July 2022.
<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT05453981>

Keywords: TranS-C; transdiagnostic sleep treatment; anxiety symptoms; sleep disturbances