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Introduction and Aim

In the eating disorders field increased referral rates and lock-down have stimulated the development of online programs. At Orri, a clinic in London delivering day care for eating disorders. lock-down was accompanied by the development of intensive online day care

Methods and Materials

Components of the online program were: 1. Online assessment, 2. Physical assessment and monitoring, 3. Individual dietetic advice and monitoring, 4. Individual therapy, 5. Individual occupational therapy, 6. Family therapy and support, 7. Psychiatry and nursing reviews, 8. A variety of online groups, eg body image, 9. Online lunch, The full Day programme ran from 9.30am to 4.20pm 5 days per week.

At the beginning and at intervals throughout treatment, clients filled in the EDE-Q, the DASS and a satisfaction questionnaire. Weight and BMI were monitored as required. Bloods were measured by community pathology services. Online (OL) results were compared with a group of clients receiving only On-site (OS) (face to face) treatment, and a third group receiving a blend of the two approaches (BL).

Statistics were calculated using SPSS (v29). Repeated measures ANOVA was used to compare the three programmes (OL, OS, BL) for questionnaire ratings for the whole group. The same analysis was used to compare the effects of the programmes on BMI for the clients underweight at assessment (BMI<18.5). Data from previous clients was used in a Power analysis which gave a minimum number of 6 participants in each group to have an 80% chance of detecting a significant difference at $p<.05$.

Discussion

In this study, with adequate numbers in each group, BMI for underweight clients, (Anorexia Nervosa) and general and eating disorder symptoms for the whole group changed in a favourable direction. ANOVA was unable to distinguish between treatment programmes. This is surprising but may be explained partly by the intensity of the online day programme offered.

Conclusions

Conclusions: At Orri, online intensive day care for eating disorders appeared as effective as on-site day care in improving BMI in underweight clients and in reducing psychological symptoms in the whole group.

Results

Preliminary results showed the following:

Diagnosis: AN 69% BN 14% BED 7%, ARFID 1.5% and 7% OSFED or UFED.
The numbers in each group were: Online (OL) 55, On site (OS) 140, Blended (BL) 47. The numbers of clients with baseline BMI <18.5 were OL 28, OS 86, BL 33

RMANOVA: EDEQ and DASS, BMI in underweight clients: There were significant falls in all questionnaire scores, and significant increases in BMI, ($p<.001$) with no significant difference between programmes ($p>.1$). 57.3% of underweight clients had BMI >18.5 by discharge. Satisfaction was high. The same results were obtained comparing just OL with OS programmes.

Keywords

Eating disorders, Pandemic, Day care, Online, Non-randomised trial