



A combined CBT-E-IPT treatment for eating disorders - outcome and patient perspective: a PhD thesis in the making

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Introduction: Eating disorders are serious psychiatric conditions, and both cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) have demonstrated good treatment efficacy. However, not all patients achieve recovery, and many drop out of treatment.

Factors associated with poorer treatment outcomes and higher dropout rates in CBT include depressive symptoms and interpersonal difficulties. For patients with eating disorders and comorbid interpersonal problems, an integrated treatment combining CBT and IPT has therefore been proposed.

Aims: In this project, we aim to examine whether a combined CBT and IPT treatment show improvements in eating disorder symptoms, depressive symptoms, everyday functioning, and emotion regulation. Another aim is to investigate the patients' experiences of this treatment.

Methods: This doctoral project employs an outcome study design in which a total of 60 participants will be recruited from two specialised eating disorder outpatient clinics. The patients will receive an integrated treatment combining CBT and IPT. Outcomes will be assessed using the EDE-Q, CIA, MADRS, and DERS at treatment completion and at 12-month follow-up. Regression analyses will also be conducted to examine which treatment-related and patient-related factors are associated with treatment outcomes. In addition, we will conduct an interview study to explore patients' experiences of treatment.

Clinical implications: A substantial proportion of patients with eating disorders do not achieve recovery despite multiple treatment attempts and many drop out of treatment. Patients have reported that existing treatments may place a predominant emphasis on the medical aspects of the eating disorder and may insufficiently address the individual within their broader interpersonal context. A combined CBT and IPT treatment may represent a potential way to better align treatment with patients' expressed needs while maintaining treatment effectiveness.

Furthermore, the project aims to explore aspects related to both treatment processes and patient characteristics that may be of clinical relevance across treatment modalities.

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