Cognitive behavioural therapy in chronic fatigue syndrome: a randomised controlled trial of an outpatient group programme

O'Dowd H, Gladwell P, Rogers C A, Hollinghurst S, Gregory A

Record Status
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Citation

Authors' objectives
The aim of this review is to test the hypothesis that group cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) will produce an effective and cost-effective management strategy for patients in primary care with chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalopathy (CFS/ME).

Authors' conclusions
Group CBT did not achieve the expected change in the primary outcome measure as a significant number did not achieve scores within the normal range post-intervention. The treatment did not return a significant number of subjects to within the normal range on this domain; however, significant improvements were evident in some areas. Group CBT was effective in treating symptoms of fatigue, mood and physical fitness in CFS/ME. It was found to be as effective as trials using individual therapy in these domains. However, it did not bring about improvement in cognitive function or quality of life. There was also evidence of improvement in the EAS group, which indicates that there is limited value in the non-specific effects of therapy. Further research is needed to develop better outcome measures, assessments of the broader costs of the illness and a clearer picture of the characteristics best fitted to this type of intervention.

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Address for correspondence
NETSCC, Health Technology Assessment, Alpha House, University of Southampton Science Park, Southampton, SO16 7NS UK Tel: +44 23 8059 5586 Email: hta@hta.ac.uk
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