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INTERNET DELIVERY AND PEER SUPPORT: NEW VENUES FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTIONS OF LATE-LIFE DEPRESSION

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Late-life depression has detrimental consequences for the patients and their families. Despite the increased efficacy of psychosocial interventions for late-life depression, a significant number of older adults do not receive psychosocial interventions¹. Barriers to psychological treatment include costs, wait-lists, stigma, and limited access to treatment due to geographical and logistical factors¹. Overcoming these barriers may extend psychosocial interventions to a group of older adults in great need of treatment.

In this issue of American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, Tomasino et al's² study aims to address gaps in treatment of older adults with depression. The authors proposed an innovative intervention that incorporated two non-traditional forms of psychosocial interventions for older adults: internet-based cognitive behavioral therapy with or without peer support. The aim of the study was to evaluate the feasibility and preliminary efficacy of these two forms of psychosocial intervention in improving treatment outcomes.

The internet provides an alternative way to engage older adults in depression treatment and to improve access to care³. Advantages of the internet-delivered programs are flexibility of administration, geographical flexibility with access to rural areas where few treatment options are available, and access to those whose disability may prevent them from following weekly outpatient treatment. Despite the advantages, internet delivered therapies, including self-guided internet interventions, have increased drop-outs and reduced adherence to treatment⁴. The

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